

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

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A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

IN THREE BOOKS.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

BOOK THE SECOND. THE GOLDEN THREAD.

CHAPTER XV. KNITTING.

THERE had been earlier drinking than usual in the wine-shop of Monsieur Defarge. As early as six o'clock in the morning, sallow faces peeping through its barred windows had descried other faces within, bending over measures of wine. Monsieur Defarge sold a very thin wine at the best of times, but, it would seem to have been an unusually thin wine that he sold at this time. A sour wine, moreover, or a souring, for its influence on the mood of those who drank it was to make them gloomy. No vivacious Bacchanalian flame leaped out of the pressed grape of Monsieur Defarge; but, a smouldering fire that burnt in the dark, lay hidden in the dregs of it.

This had been the third morning in succession, on which there had been early drinking at the wine-shop of Monsieur Defarge. It had begun on Monday, and here was Wednesday come. There had been more of early brooding than drinking; for, many men had listened and whispered and slunk about there from the time of the opening of the door, who could not have laid a piece of money on the counter to save their souls. These were to the full as interested in the place, however, as if they could have commanded whole barrels of wine; and they glided from seat to seat, and from corner to corner, swallowing talk in lieu of drink, with greedy looks.

Notwithstanding an unusual flow of company, the master of the wine-shop was not visible. He was not missed; for, nobody who crossed the threshold looked for him, nobody asked for him, nobody wondered to see only Madame Defarge in her seat, presiding over the distribution of wine, with a bowl of battered small coins before her, as much defaced and beaten out of their original impress as the small coinage of humanity from whose ragged pockets they had come.

A suspended interest and a prevalent absence of mind, were perhaps observed by the spies who looked in at the wine-shop, as they looked in at every place, high and low, from the king's palace to the criminal's gaol. Games at cards lan-

guished, players at dominoes musingly built towers with them, drinkers drew figures on the tables with spilt drops of wine, Madame Defarge herself picked out the pattern on her sleeve with her toothpick, and saw and heard something inaudible and invisible a long way off.

Thus, Saint Antoine in this vinous feature of his, until mid-day. It was high noontide, when two dusty men passed through his streets and under his swinging lamps: of whom, one was Monsieur Defarge: the other, a mender of roads in a blue cap. All adust and athirst, the two entered the wine-shop. Their arrival had lighted a kind of fire in the breast of Saint Antoine, fast spreading as they came along, which stirred and flickered in flames of faces at most doors and windows. Yet, no one had followed them, and no man spoke when they entered the wine-shop, though the eyes of every man there were turned upon them.

"Good day, gentlemen!" said Monsieur Defarge.

It may have been a signal for loosening the general tongue. It elicited an answering chorus of "Good day!"

"It is bad weather, gentlemen," said Defarge, shaking his head.

Upon which, every man looked at his neighbour, and then all cast down their eyes and sat silent. Except one man, who got up and went out.

"My wife," said Defarge aloud, addressing Madame Defarge; "I have travelled certain leagues with this good mender of roads, called Jacques. I met him—by accident—a day and a half's journey out of Paris. He is a good child, this mender of roads, called Jacques. Give him to drink, my wife!"

A second man got up and went out. Madame Defarge set wine before the mender of roads called Jacques, who doffed his blue cap to the company, and drank. In the breast of his blouse, he carried some coarse dark bread; he ate of this between whiles, and sat munching and drinking near Madame Defarge's counter. A third man got up and went out.

Defarge refreshed himself with a draught of wine—but, he took less than was given to the stranger, as being himself a man to whom it was no rarity—and stood waiting until the countryman had made his breakfast. He looked at no one present, and no one now looked at

him; not even Madame Defarge, who had taken up her knitting, and was at work.

"Have you finished your repast, friend?" he asked, in due season.

"Yes, thank you."

"Come then! You shall see the apartment that I told you you could occupy. It will suit you to a marvel."

Out of the wine-shop into the street, out of the street into a court-yard, out of the court-yard up a steep staircase, out of the staircase into a garret—formerly the garret where a white-haired man sat on a low bench, stooping forward and very busy, making shoes.

No white-haired man was there now; but, the three men were there who had gone out of the wine-shop singly. And between them and the white-haired man afar off, was the one small link, that they had once looked in at him through the chinks in the wall.

Defarge closed the door carefully, and spoke in a subdued voice:

"Jacques One, Jacques Two, Jacques Three! This is the witness encountered by appointment, by me, Jacques Four. He will tell you all. Speak, Jacques Five!"

The mender of roads, blue cap in hand, wiped his swarthy forehead with it, and said, "Where shall I commence, monsieur?"

"Commence," was Monsieur Defarge's not unreasonable reply, "at the commencement."

"I saw him then, messieurs," began the mender of roads, "a year ago this running summer, underneath the carriage of the Marquis, hanging by the chain. Behold the manner of it. I leaving my work on the road, the sun going to bed, the carriage of the Marquis slowly ascending the hill, he hanging by the chain—like this."

Again, the mender of roads went through the old performance; in which he ought to have been perfect by that time, seeing that it had been the infallible resource and indispensable entertainment of his village during a whole year.

Jacques One struck in, and asked if he had ever seen the man before?

"Never," answered the mender of roads, recovering his perpendicular.

Jacques Three demanded how he afterwards recognised him then?

"By his tall figure," said the mender of roads, softly, and with his finger at his nose. "When Monsieur the Marquis demands that evening, 'Say, what is he like?' I make response, 'Tall as a spectre.'"

"You should have said, short as a dwarf," returned Jacques Two.

"But what did I know! The deed was not then accomplished, neither did he confide in me. Observe! Under those circumstances even, I do not offer my testimony. Monsieur the Marquis indicates me with his finger, standing near our little fountain, and says, 'To me! Bring that rascal!' My faith, messieurs, I offer nothing."

"He is right there, Jacques," murmured Defarge, to him who had interrupted. "Go on!"

"Good!" said the mender of roads, with an air of mystery. "The tall man is lost, and he is sought—how many months? Nine, ten, eleven?"

"No matter, the number," said Defarge. "He is well hidden, but at last he is unluckily found. Go on!"

"I am again at work upon the hill-side, and the sun is again about to go to bed. I am collecting my tools to descend to my cottage down in the village below, where it is already dark, when I raise my eyes, and see coming over the hill, six soldiers. In the midst of them is a tall man with his arms bound—tied to his sides, like this!"

With the aid of his indispensable cap, he represented a man with his elbows bound fast at his hips, with cords that were knotted behind him.

"I stand aside, messieurs, by my heap of stones, to see the soldiers and their prisoner pass (for it is a solitary road, that, where any spectacle is well worth looking at), and at first, as they approach, I see no more than that they are six soldiers with a tall man bound, and that they are almost black, to my sight—except on the side of the sun going to bed, where they have a red edge, messieurs. Also, I see that their long shadows are on the hollow ridge on the opposite side of the road, and are on the hill above it, and are like the shadows of giants. Also, I see that they are covered with dust, and that the dust moves with them as they come, tramp, tramp! But when they advance quite near to me, I recognise the tall man, and he recognises me. Ah, but he would be well content to precipitate himself over the hill-side once again, as on the evening when he and I first encountered, close to the same spot!"

He described it as if he were there, and it was evident that he saw it vividly; perhaps he had not seen much in his life.

"I do not show the soldiers that I recognise the tall man; he does not show the soldiers that he recognises me; we do it, and we know it, with our eyes. 'Come on!' says the chief of that company, pointing to the village, 'bring him fast to his tomb!' and they bring him faster. I follow. His arms are swelled because of being bound so tight, his wooden shoes are large and clumsy, and he is lame. Because he is lame, and consequently slow, they drive him with their guns—like this!"

He imitated the action of a man's being impelled forward by the butt-ends of muskets.

"As they descend the hill like madmen running a race, he falls. They laugh and pick him up again. His face is bleeding and covered with dust, but he cannot touch it; thereupon, they laugh again. They bring him into the village; all the village runs to look; they take him past the mill, and up to the prison; all the village sees the prison gate open in the darkness of the night, and swallow him—like this!"

He opened his mouth as wide as he could, and shut it with a sounding snap of his teeth.

Observant of his unwillingness to mar the effect by opening it again, Defarge said, "Go on, Jacques."

"All the village," pursued the mender of roads, on tiptoe and in a low voice, "withdraws; all the village whispers by the fountain; all the village sleeps; all the village dreams of that unhappy one, within the locks and bars of the prison on the crag, and never to come out of it, except to perish. In the morning, with my tools upon my shoulder, eating my morsel of black bread as I go, I make a circuit by the prison, on my way to my work. There, I see him, high up, behind the bars of a lofty iron cage, bloody and dusty as last night, looking through. He has no hand free, to wave to me; I dare not call to him; he regards me like a dead man."

Defarge and the three glanced darkly at one another. The looks of all of them were dark, repressed, and revengeful, as they listened to the countryman's story; the manner of all of them, while it was secret was authoritative too. They had the air of a rough tribunal; Jacques One and Two sitting on the old pallet-bed, each with his chin resting on his hand, and his eyes intent on the road mender; Jacques Three, equally intent, on one knee behind them, with his agitated hand always gliding over the network of fine nerves about his mouth and nose; Defarge standing between them and the narrator whom he had stationed in the light of the window, by turns looking from him to them and from them to him.

"Go on Jacques," said Defarge.

"He remains up there in his iron cage, some days. The village looks at him by stealth, for it is afraid. But it always looks up, from a distance, at the prison on the crag; and in the evening when the work of the day is achieved and it assembles to gossip at the fountain, all faces are turned towards the prison. Formerly, they were turned towards the posting-house; now, they are turned towards the prison. They whisper at the fountain, that although condemned to death he will not be executed; they say that petitions have been presented in Paris, showing that he was enraged and made mad by the death of his child; they say that a petition has been presented to the King himself. What do I know? It is possible. Perhaps yes, perhaps no."

"Listen then, Jacques," Number One of that name sternly interposed. "Know that a petition was presented to the King and Queen. All here, yourself excepted, saw the King take it, in his carriage in the street, sitting beside the Queen. It is Defarge whom you see here, who, at the hazard of his life, darted out before the horses, with the petition in his hand."

"And once again listen, Jacques!" said the kneeling Number Three: his fingers ever wandering over and over those fine nerves, with a strikingly greedy air, as if he hungered for something—that was neither food nor drink; "the guard, horse and foot, surrounded the petitioner, and struck him blows. You hear?"

"I hear, messieurs."

"Go on then," said Defarge.

"Again; on the other hand, they whisper at the fountain," resumed the countryman, "that he is brought down into our country to be executed on the spot, and that he will very certainly be executed. They even whisper that because he has slain Monseigneur, and because Monseigneur was the father of his tenants—serfs—what you will—he will be executed as a parricide. One old man says at the fountain, that his right hand, armed with the knife, will be burnt off before his face; that, into wounds which will be made in his arms, his breast, and his legs, there will be poured boiling oil, melted lead, hot resin, wax, and sulphur; finally, that he will be torn limb from limb by four strong horses. That old man says, all this was actually done to a prisoner who made an attempt on the life of the last King, Louis Fifteen. But how do I know if he lies? I am not a scholar."

"Listen once again then, Jacques!" said the man with the restless hand and the craving air. "The name of that prisoner was Damiens, and it was all done in open day, in the open streets of this city of Paris; and nothing was more noticed in the vast concourse that saw it done, than the crowd of ladies of quality and fashion, who were full of eager attention to the last—to the last, Jacques, prolonged until nightfall, when he had lost two legs and an arm, and still breathed! And it was done—why, how old are you?"

"Thirty-five," said the mender of roads, who looked sixty.

"It was done when you were more than ten years old; you might have seen it."

"Enough!" said Defarge, with grim impatience. "Long live the Devil! Go on."

"Well! Some whisper this, some whisper that; they speak of nothing else; even the fountain appears to fall to that tune. At length, on Sunday night when all the village is asleep, come soldiers, winding down from the prison, and their guns ring on the stones of the little street. Workmen dig, workmen hammer, soldiers laugh and sing; in the morning, by the fountain, there is raised a gallows forty feet high, poisoning the water."

The mender of roads looked *through* rather than *at* the low ceiling, and pointed as if he saw the gallows somewhere in the sky.

"All work is stopped, all assemble there, nobody leads the cows out, the cows are there with the rest. At mid-day, the roll of drums. Soldiers have marched into the prison in the night, and he is in the midst of many soldiers. He is bound as before, and in his mouth there is a gag—tied so, with a tight string, making him look almost as if he laughed." He suggested it, by creasing his face with his two thumbs, from the corners of his mouth to his ears. "On the top of the gallows is fixed the knife, blade upwards, with its point in the air. He is hanged there forty feet high—and is left hanging, poisoning the water."

They looked at one another, as he used his blue cap to wipe his face, on which the per-

spiration had started afresh while he recalled the spectacle.

"It is frightful, messieurs. How can the women and the children draw water! Who can gossip of an evening, under that shadow! Under it, have I said? When I left the village, Monday evening as the sun was going to bed, and looked back from the hill, the shadow struck across the church, across the mill, across the prison—seemed to strike across the earth, messieurs, to where the sky rests upon it!"

The hungry man gnawed one of his fingers as he looked at the other three, and his finger quivered with the craving that was on him.

"That's all, messieurs. I left at sunset (as I had been warned to do), and I walked on, that night and half next day, until I met (as I was warned I should) this comrade. With him, I came on, now riding and now walking, through the rest of yesterday and through last night. And here you see me!"

After a gloomy silence, the first Jacques said, "Good! You have acted and recounted, faithfully. Will you wait for us a little, outside the door?"

"Very willingly," said the mender of roads. Whom Defarge escorted to the top of the stairs, and, leaving seated there, returned.

The three had risen, and their heads were together when he came back to the garret.

"How say you, Jacques?" demanded Number One. "To be registered?"

"To be registered, as doomed to destruction," returned Defarge.

"Magnificent!" croaked the man with the craving.

"The château, and all the race?" inquired the first.

"The château and all the race," returned Defarge. "Extermination."

The hungry man repeated, in a rapturous croak, "Magnificent!" and began gnawing another finger.

"Are you sure," asked Jacques Two, of Defarge, "that no embarrassment can arise from our manner of keeping the register. Without doubt it is safe, for no one beyond ourselves can decipher it; but shall we always be able to decipher it—or, I ought to say, will she?"

"Jacques," returned Defarge, drawing himself up, "if madame my wife undertook to keep the register in her memory alone, she would not lose a word of it—not a syllable of it. Knitted, in her own stitches and her own symbols, it will always be as plain to her as the sun. Confide in Madame Defarge. It would be easier for the weakest poltroon that lives, to erase himself from existence, than to erase one letter of his name or crimes from the knitted register of Madame Defarge."

There was a murmur of confidence and approval, and then the man who hungered, asked: "Is this rustic to be sent back soon? I hope so. He is very simple; is he not a little dangerous?"

"He knows nothing," said Defarge; "at least nothing more than would easily elevate himself to a gallows of the same height. I charge

myself with him; let him remain with me; I will take care of him, and set him on his road. He wishes to see the fine world—the King, the Queen, and Court; let him see them on Sunday."

"What?" exclaimed the hungry man, staring. "Is it a good sign, that he wishes to see Royalty and Nobility?"

"Jacques," said Defarge; "judiciously show a cat, milk, if you wish her to thirst for it. Judiciously show a dog his natural prey, if you wish him to bring it down one day."

Nothing more was said, and the mender of roads, being found already dozing on the topmost stair, was advised to lay himself down on the pallet-bed and take some rest. He needed no persuasion, and was soon asleep.

Worse quarters than Defarge's wine-shop, could easily have been found in Paris for a provincial slave of that degree. Saving for a mysterious dread of madame by which he was constantly haunted, his life was very new and agreeable. But, madame sat all day at her counter, so expressly unconscious of him, and so particularly determined not to perceive that his being there had any connexion with anything below the surface, that he shook in his wooden shoes whenever his eye lighted on her. For, he contended with himself that it was impossible to foresee what that lady might pretend next; and he felt assured that if she should take it into her brightly ornamented head to pretend that she had seen him do a murder and afterwards flay the victim, she would infallibly go through with it until the play was played out.

Therefore, when Sunday came, the mender of roads was not enchanted (though he said he was) to find that madame was to accompany monsieur and himself to Versailles. It was additionally disconcerting to have madame knitting all the way there, in a public conveyance; it was additionally disconcerting yet, to have madame in the crowd in the afternoon, still with her knitting in her hands as the crowd waited to see the carriage of the King and Queen.

"You work hard, madame," said a man near her.

"Yes," answered Madame Defarge; "I have a good deal to do."

"What do you make, madame?"

"Many things."

"For instance——?"

"For instance," returned Madame Defarge, composedly, "shrouds."

The man moved a little further away, as soon as he could, and the mender of roads fanned himself with his blue cap: feeling it mightily close and oppressive. If he needed a King and Queen to restore him, he was fortunate in having his remedy at hand; for, soon the large-faced King and the fair-faced Queen came in their golden coach, attended by the shining Bull's Eye of their Court, a glittering multitude of laughing ladies and fine lords; and in jewels and silks and powder and splendour and elegantly spurning figures and handsomely disdainful faces of both sexes, the mender of roads bathed himself, so much to his temporary intoxi-

cation, that he cried Long live the King, Long live the Queen, Long live everybody and everything! as if he had never heard of ubiquitous Jacques in his time. Then, there were gardens, courtyards, terraces, fountains, green banks, more King and Queen, more Bull's Eye, more lords and ladies, more Long live they all! until he absolutely wept with sentiment. During the whole of this scene, which lasted some three hours, he had plenty of shouting and weeping and sentimental company, and throughout Defarge held him by the collar, as if to restrain him from flying at the objects of his brief devotion and tearing them to pieces.

"Bravo!" said Defarge, clapping him on the back when it was over, like a patron; "you are a good boy!"

The mender of roads was now coming to himself, and was mistrustful of having made a mistake in his late demonstrations; but no.

"You are the fellow we want," said Defarge, in his ear; "you make these fools believe that it will last for ever. Then, they are the more insolent, and it is the nearer ended."

"Hey!" cried the mender of roads, reflectively; "that's true."

"These fools know nothing. While they despise your breath, and would stop it for ever and ever, in you or in a hundred like you rather than in one of their own horses or dogs, they only know what your breath tells them. Let it deceive them, then, a little longer; it cannot deceive them too much."

Madame Defarge looked superciliously at the client, and nodded in confirmation.

"As to you," said she, "you would shout and shed tears for anything, if it made a show and a noise. Say! Would you not?"

"Truly, madame, I think so. For the moment."

"If you were shown a great heap of dolls, and were set upon them to pluck them to pieces and despoil them for your own advantage, you would pick out the richest and gayest. Say! Would you not?"

"Truly yes, madame."

"Yes. And if you were shown a flock of birds unable to fly, and were set upon them to strip them of their feathers for your own advantage, you would set upon the birds of the finest feathers; would you not?"

"It is true, madame."

"You have seen both dolls and birds to-day," said Madame Defarge, with a wave of her hand towards the place where they had last been apparent; "now, go home!"

DRIFT.

THE reader who swears by the "good old days," will, perhaps, be satisfied to accept the following amusing picture of domestic life in the beginning of the fifteenth century, which is drawn from the "Inquisitions ad quod damnum," a series of documents forming an important portion of the Chancery division of our National Records. These Inquisitions are most of them taken to

show the King whether it will be to "the damage or injury of him or any one else," if he allow lands to be given in mortmain; but, as in the case before us, inquiries upon other matters have been interpolated with this class of records.

King Henry the Fifth having been given to understand that an outrage had been committed on the person of one of his subjects, John Mortimer, of Grendon, in Northamptonshire, issued his writ, on the third day of December in the first year of his reign, to his beloved and faithful John Cokayn, Sir John Reynes, Thomas Wydeville, John Barton, junior, William Palmer, William Wakefield, and John Geffard, appointing them his Commissioners to inquire into the case; which they, having duly summoned a jury, accordingly did at Northampton Castle, on the Thursday before Christmas. Christmas, in that year, 1413, fell on a Monday.

The result of their researches appears below, translated from the Latin; and I pray all who read it, to take breath for an awfully involved sentence. Latin scribes were always a long-winded race.

The jurors say, that whereas John Mortimer, of Grendon, Esquire, was sitting in his mansion house of Grendon aforesaid, at the dawn, busy about the shaving of his beard, his beard being in part shaved and in part not shaved, clothed in his doublet only, without a hood or any other covering to his body, a certain William Trussell, Esquire, of Eston Maudyt, Junior, John Malpas, otherwise Kettell, and others, varlets of the aforesaid William Trussell, with many other malefactors of the counties of Chester and Stafford, whose names at present are unknown, in great multitude and armed in force, led on by the conspiracy, confederacy, and malice prepense of the aforesaid William Trussell and others, to the terror and perturbation of the Lord the King's people, riding on horseback, with force of arms, and arrayed in warlike manner, namely, with coats of fence, jakkes, bows, arrows, swords, one-handed and two-handed, hoods of mail, and daggers, on Sunday (these were the days when the clergy possessed great moral influence) next after the feast of St. Hugh the Bishop, in the first year of the reign of King Henry the Fifth from the Conquest, broke into the closes and mansion house of the aforesaid John Mortimer, at Grendon aforesaid, against the peace of the Lord the King, and then and there insulted the said John Mortimer, beat, imprisoned, and ill-treated him, some of the aforesaid malefactors shouting, "Slee, slee, slee," and others of the aforesaid malefactors shouting, "Houghsynowehym, Houghsynowehym" (Hock, sinew, ham string him! for which the incomplete state of his costume afforded a tempting facility), and (evidently confident in the justice of their cause and the strength of their jakkes, &c.) "let us hastily depart."

And they the said John Mortimer thus made prisoner, led, with daggers and other weapons pointed to his heart, and violent and malicious threats of death, away with them to Eston aforesaid, and him there as well as at Grendon

aforesaid, against the law and custom of the realm of England, long detained, namely, for the space of four hours of the day (years might have been expected from the previous adverb), against the dignity and tranquillity of the King's peace, and to the manifest lesion of his crown, whereby the life of the said John Mortimer was despaired of; until the constables of the adjacent villages, meeting together for the rescue of the said John Mortimer and the salvation of the King's peace, marched and ran (at the double, let us hope) towards Eston aforesaid, and the aforesaid William Trussell and the other malefactors, awed by the said body of people so coming as aforesaid to the help and defence of the said John Mortimer and the maintenance of the King's peace, then permitted the said John Mortimer to depart out of his prison.

It is satisfactory to see that even in these rude days "the police" were respected.

Should not my late Lord Chancellor have lived five hundred years back, when the press was unborn, the parliament a toy, and the voice of the public a feeble cry, save when it roared, like a despot of the nursery, for its food or its liberty? Then he might have made what appointments he would, without contradiction, outcry, condemnation, or, worse than all, reversal. From amongst the Miscellaneous Letters in the Chancery department of the public Records take this, all you good people who have railed at Lord Chelmsford's nepotism, precious epistle without name, date, or address, from some unhappy devil of a clerk in Chancery, with an official grief in his bosom, to Sir John de Langton, most probably, the Chancellor to King Edward the First, A.D. 1292, or thereabouts, and learn a lesson. It is to be borne in mind that the Chancellor then was not half, nor a third, nor a sixth, in degree as potent as he is now. Keeping and affixing the King's seal was, according to the learned Sir Henry Spelman, the greater part of their trust and employment.

Here is my translation from the Latin original, of a clear, sustained, yet condensed groan from a Clerk in Chancery: "My Lord,—Whatever pleases you pleases me, yet among those things which, as I have been given to understand, have been ordered by you in the Chancery, there is one which fills me with displeasure; and this is that Sir N. de Bassingbourn now fills my place among our other companions the Clerks of Course. (The Cursitor Clerks, or officers belonging to the Chancery that made out original writs.) Now I pray you, perpend, that I have laboured more in this very Chancery of our Lord the now King than he has done, and I promise you to hold as high a place as he, even though he be the older man, and also to despatch as many, and more, suitors in the Court as he can do, though he swear it.

"Besides, I marvel that you should have given him my clerk without asking either my leave or his; which clerk cares no longer to hold with

such a master, nor indeed can he do so, since such a master is more likely to be taught by such a disciple, than such a disciple by such a master, which seems to me to be inconvenient.

"And again, seeing from what a position God has called you to such honour in the world, you ought sometimes to think of your companions as contemporaries who love you well, and who were brought up with you in the household of your first master, at your first coming to Court, and as such you are bound to promote them, if you would the oftener recal your inborn honesty and good feeling to your mind, and before the eyes of your heart.

"May these words therefore that I write out of the full fervour of my love, move you to the advancement of my state, and the augmentation of my condition."

Here, as his conclusion, the petitioner adds a crafty caution against the Chancellor's venturing the correspondence, and the likelihood of his dismissing it, as it were, by discussion:

"It is neither fitting nor necessary to consult my fellows upon this subject, but say the word forthwith and let it be done, I pray you, out of the plenitude of your power. I swear to you by the Tetragrammaton of God, that there lives not in the whole world a poor clerk who loves you more than I do; as I firmly believe to the utmost of my power. And this I call God to witness. Farewell, and may God cause your seed to increase and multiply."

THE LAST LEAVES OF A SORROWFUL BOOK.

IN the history of our lives there is one touching domestic experience, associated with the solemn mystery of Death, which is familiar to us all. When the grave has claimed its own; when the darkened rooms are open again to the light of heaven; when grief rests more gently on the weary heart, and the tears, restrained through the day, fall quietly in the lonely night hours, there comes a time at which we track the farewell journey of the dead over the familiar ways of home by the simple household relics that the lost and loved companion has left to guide us. At every point of the dread pilgrimage from this world to the next, some domestic trace remains that appeals tenderly to the memory, and that leads us on, from the day when the last illness began, to the day that left us parted on a sudden from our brother or sister-spirit by the immeasurable gulf between Life and Eternity. The sofa on which we laid the loved figure so tenderly when the first warning weakness declared itself; the bed, never slept in since, which was the next inevitable stage in the sad journey; all the little sick-room contrivances for comfort that passed from our living hands to the one beloved hand which shall press ours in gratitude no more; the last book read to beguile the wakeful night, with the last place marked where the weary eyes closed for ever over the page; the little favourite trinkets laid aside never to be taken up again; the glass, still standing by the

bedside, from which we moistened the parched lips for the last time; the handkerchief which dried the deathly moisture from the dear face and touched the wasted cheeks almost at the same moment when our lips pressed them at parting—these mute relics find a language of their own, when the first interval of grief allows us to see them again; a language that fills the mind and softens the heart, and makes the sacred memory of the dead doubly precious; a language that speaks to every nation and every rank, and tells, while the world lasts, the one solemn story that exalts, purifies, and touches us all alike.

Reflections such as these are naturally suggested by a relic of public interest, associated with a public bereavement, which now lies before us while we write. England has not forgotten the brave and devoted men who went out from her, never to return, on Franklin's expedition to the Polar Seas. Few subjects of national interest have sunk deeper into the public mind than the fate of the lost heroes whose last earthly resting-place is still hidden from us in the mysterious solitudes of the frozen deep. Every step of their progress so long as any trace of it was left, was once eagerly watched; every chance of their preservation, so long as those chances remained, was once anxiously discussed; every relic of their past existence that has drifted back to us, since we mourned them as lost, has been welcomed with melancholy gratitude, and treasured with loving care. Any fresh trace of their progress on the fatal voyage which we can still recover, is a memorial of the dead and gone, only less precious than those nearer and dearer memorials associated with the private and personal losses which have tried us all within the circle of our own homes.

The new relic of the lost Arctic voyagers to which we now refer, is as simple in form as any of those little household remembrances which hard experience has taught us to regard with such tender care. It consists only of a few pages of a journal on board ship, kept by Captain Fitzjames, of the *Erebus*, and addressed by him, from the coast of Greenland, to Mrs. Coningham. The manuscript thus produced has been privately printed by Mr. Coningham, well known to many of our readers as the Member of Parliament for Brighton, and as the advocate of some important reforms in connexion with the purchase of pictures for the National Gallery. Although Captain Fitzjames was not related either to Mr. or Mrs. Coningham, he had always lived on terms of the closest intimacy with them; having being brought up at an early age under the roof of Mr. Coningham's father. Captain Fitzjames's career began in the year 1825, when he entered the navy as a master's assistant. At a later period, he became a first class volunteer. After serving in various ships, he joined Colonel Chesney in the *Euphrates* expedition; and, before sailing, rescued a Liverpool tide-waiter from drowning, at the risk of his own life, by jumping overboard in his clothes in the middle of the Mersey—an heroic action which the authorities of Liverpool rewarded by

presenting him with a medal, and with the freedom of their city. Subsequently this brave officer joined the Chinese expedition, and was severely wounded. His next, and last, exertions in the service of his country were devoted—against Mr. Coningham's urgent entreaties—to the fatal Arctic Expedition under Sir John Franklin; and his narrative of that part of the voyage which brought the *Erebus* and *Terror* to the coast of Greenland is now privately printed, as the simplest and truest memorial of a man whose happy privilege it was to be loved, honoured, and trusted by all who knew him.

It is necessary to state that the journal produced under Mr. Coningham's supervision is intended for private circulation among his own friends. That gentleman has, however, voluntarily accorded to us the permission to make what literary use we may think fit of Captain Fitzjames's Diary. We have gladly accepted Mr. Coningham's offer, not only in consideration of the deep public interest which attaches to this unpretending document, viewed simply as an addition to our few memorials of the lost Polar Expedition, but also on account of the remarkable merit of the journal itself. Every page of it assures us that Captain Fitzjames added to his high professional qualifications the two rare gifts of a quick and true observation of character and a happy facility in conveying the results of that observation plainly, unaffectedly, and graphically to others. Narrow as its limits are, this interesting journal effects its avowed object of placing us on board ship by the writer's side, of showing us his floating home in its most familiar and most domestic aspect, and of introducing us, in a delightfully considerate and kindly spirit, to the more prominent characters among the officers and the men. We propose to make our readers sharers in the attractive view thus presented—the last view attainable, so far as we know at present—of past life and past events on board one of the two doomed Discovery Ships; in the full belief that every one who looks over them will close the pages here presented, as we have closed the journal from which they are quoted, with a heightened admiration and a closer sympathy for Sir John Franklin, for Captain Fitzjames, and for their brave companions on that memorable Voyage which Englishmen who prize the honour of their country can never forget.

The sad story takes us back to the June of eighteen hundred and forty-five. The two discovery ships, the *Erebus* and *Terror*, are at sea, with the transport containing their supplies in attendance on them. The time is noon; the place on the ocean is near the island of Rona, seventy or eighty miles from Stromness; and the two steamers, *Rattler* and *Blazer*, are taking leave—a last, long leave—of the Arctic voyagers.

"Their captains" (says the journal, referring to the two steamers) "came on board and took our letters; one from me will have told you of our doings up to that time. There was a heavy

swell and wind from north-west; but it began veering to west and south-west, which is fair. The steamers then ranged alongside of us, one on each side, as close as possible without touching, and, with the whole force of lungs of officers and men, gave us, not three, but a prolongation of cheers, to which, of course, we responded. Having done the same to the *Terror*, away they went, and in an hour or two were out of sight, leaving us with an old gull or two and the rocky Rona to look at; and then was the time to see if any one flinched from the undertaking. Every one's cry was, 'Now we are off at last!' No lingering look was cast behind. We drank Lady Franklin's health at the old gentleman's table, and, it being his daughter's birthday, hers too. But the wind, which had become fair as the steamers left (as if to give the latest best news of us), in the evening became foul from the north-west, and we were going northward instead of westward. The sky was clear, the air bracing and exhilarating. I had a slight attack of aguish headache the evening before, but am now clear-headed, and I went to bed thinking of you and dear William, whose portrait is now looking at me."

Such was the farewell to England, and the sailing away in right earnest to the Arctic seas—such the steady and hopeful spirit in which officers and men confronted the unknown and the dreadful future that was awaiting them. The next passages in the journal, which can be profitably extracted for quotation, describe the companions of Captain Fitzjames's mess.

"In our mess we have the following, whom I shall probably from time to time give you descriptions of: First Lieutenant, Gore; second, Le Vescomte; third, Fairholme; purser, Osmar; surgeon, Stanley; assistant-surgeon, Goodsir; ice-master (so called) Reid; mates—Sargent, Des Vœux, Crouch; second master, Collins; commander, you know better than he does himself.

"The most original character of all—rough, intelligent, unpolished, with a broad north country accent, but not vulgar, good-humoured, and honest-hearted—is Reid, a Greenland whaler, native of Aberdeen, who has commanded whaling vessels, and amuses us with his quaint remarks and descriptions of the ice, catching whales, &c. For instance, he just said to me, on my saying we should soon be off *Cape Farewell* at this rate, and asking if one might not generally expect a gale off it (*Cape Farewell* being the south point of Greenland), 'Ah! now, Mister Jems, we'll be having the weather fine, sir! fine. No ice at all about it, sir, unless it be the bergs—the ice 'll be gone, sir, only the bergs, which I like to see. Let it come on to blow, look out for a big 'un. Get under his lee, and hold on to him fast, sir, fast. If he drifts near the land, why, he grounds afore you do.' The idea of all the ice being gone, except the icebergs, is racy beyond description. I have just had a game of chess with the purser, Osmar, who is delightful. . . . I was at first inclined to think he was a stupid old man, because he had a chin and took snuff; but he is as merry-hearted as any young

man, full of quaint dry sayings, always good-humoured, always laughing, never a bore, takes his pinch after dinner, plays a rubber, and beats me at chess—and, he is a gentleman."

We shall hear more of the quaint ice-master, and his shrewd north country sayings. For the present, he must give way to a character of paramount interest—to the high-spirited old man who nobly led the expedition, at a time of his life when he might well have rested among us, content with his high professional position and his well-won fame. Every word in the journal relating to Sir John Franklin is now of such interest and value, that we can hardly do better than mass together the detached passages in which his name occurs, with the object of presenting all that is characteristically related of him to the reader's mind at one view.

"6th June.—To-day Sir John Franklin showed me such part of his instructions as related to the main purpose of our voyage, and the necessity of observing everything from a flea to a whale in the unknown regions we are to visit. He also told me I was especially charged with the magnetic observations. He then told all the officers that he was desired to claim all their remarks, journals, sketches, &c., on our return to England, and read us some part of his instructions to the officers of the *Trent*, the first vessel he commanded, in 1818, with Captain Buchan, on an attempt to reach the North Pole, pointing out how desirable it is to note everything, and give one's individual opinion on it. He spoke delightfully of the zealous co-operation he expected from all, and his desire to do full justice to the exertions of each. . . . At dinner, to-day, Sir John gave us a pleasant account of his expectations of being able to get through the ice on the coast of America, and his disbelief in the idea that there is open sea to the northward. He also said he believed it to be possible to reach the Pole over the ice by wintering at Spitzbergen, and going in the spring before the ice broke up and drifted to the south, as it did with Parry on it. . . . 8th.—I like a man who is in earnest. Sir John Franklin read the Church-service to-day and a sermon so very beautifully, that I defy any man not to feel the force of what he would convey. The first Sunday he read was a day or two before we sailed, when Lady Franklin, his daughter, and niece attended. Every one was struck with his extreme earnestness of manner, evidently proceeding from real conviction. . . . We are very fond of Sir John Franklin, who improves very much as we come to know more of him. He is anything but nervous or fidgety; in fact, I should say remarkable for energetic decision in sudden emergencies; but I should think he might be easily persuaded where he has not already formed a strong opinion."

These are slight touches; but the stamp of truth is on every one of them. They add to the deep regret which the sacrifice of such a man inspires; but they also strengthen our conviction of the Christian courage and resignation with which he met his dreadful end.

Let us look back again to the journal, and take our places at the mess-table with some of Captain Fitzjames's companions. Assistant-surgeon Goodsir is as well worth knowing in his way as ice-master Reid.

"6th, towards midnight.—I can't make out why Scotchmen just caught always speak in a low, hesitating, monotonous tone of voice, which is not at all times to be understood; this is, I believe, called 'cannyness.' Mr. Goodsir is 'canny.' He is long and straight, and walks upright on his toes, with his hands tucked up in each jacket pocket. He is perfectly good-humoured, very well informed on general points, in natural history learned, was Curator of the Edinburgh Museum, appears to be about twenty-eight years of age, laughs delightfully, cannot be in a passion, is enthusiastic about all 'ologies, draws the insides of microscopic animals with an imaginary pointed pencil, catches phenomena in a bucket, looks at the thermometer and every other meter, is a pleasant companion, and an acquisition to the mess . . . 10th.—A clear fine sunset at a quarter to ten, and Goodsir examining 'mollusca' in a *mæcroscope*. He is in ecstasies about a bag full of blubber-like stuff, which he has just hauled up in a net, and which turns out to be whales' food and other animals."

Goodsir and Reid are the two Characters of the expedition. But there are more members of the mess, pleasantly distinguishable one from the other, by the light of Captain Fitzjames's clear and genial observation. Crouch, the mate, "is a little black-haired, smooth-faced fellow, good-humoured in his own way; writes, reads, works, draws, all quietly; is never in the way of anybody, and always ready when wanted; but I can find no remarkable point in his character, except, perhaps, that he is, I should think, obstinate. Stanley, the surgeon, I knew in China. He was in the Cornwallis a short time, where he worked very hard in his vocation. Is rather inclined to be good-looking, but fat, with jet-black hair, very white hands, which are always abominably clean, and the shirt-sleeves tucked up; giving one unpleasant ideas that he would not mind cutting one's leg off immediately—"if not sooner." He is thoroughly good-natured and obliging, and very attentive to our mess. Le Vescomte you know. He improves, if possible, on closer acquaintance. Fairholme, you know or have seen, is a smart, agreeable companion, and a well-informed man. Sargent, a nice, pleasant-looking lad, very good-natured. Des Vœux, I knew in the Cornwallis. He went out in her to join the *Endymion*, and was then a mere boy. He is now a most unexceptionable, clever, agreeable, light-hearted, obliging young fellow, and a great favourite of Hodgson's, which is much in his favour besides. Graham Gore, the first lieutenant, a man of great stability of character, a very good officer, and the sweetest of tempers, is not so much a man of the world as Fairholme or Des Vœux, is more of Le Vescomte's style, without his shyness. He plays the flute dreadfully well, draws some-

times very well, sometimes very badly, but is altogether a capital fellow.

"Here ends my catalogue. I don't know whether I have managed to convey an impression of our mess, and you know me sufficiently to be sure that I mention their little faults, failings, and peculiarities in all charity. I wish I could, however, convey to you a just idea of the immense stock of good feeling, good-humour, and real kindness of heart in our small mess. We are very happy."

They are very happy. What a pathos in those four simple words, read by the light of our after experience! They are very happy. How delightfully the little strokes of character in the journal open the view to us of the cheerful, simple-hearted social intercourse of the sailor-brotherhood! How vividly, between tears and smiles, we see the honest faces round the mess-table, as day by day draws the good ship nearer and nearer to the cruel north! Purser Osmar, taking his after-dinner pinch, and playing his rubber; long, straight, pleasantly-laughing Goodsir, matching his learning and his science against ice-master Reid, and his natural north-country sharpness; plump, white-handed Surgeon Stanley, with an attentive eye to the appointments of the mess-table; little, quiet, steady, black-haired Crouch, listening to the conversation, while sweet-tempered Des Vœux keeps it going pleasantly, and Graham Gore sits near at hand, ready to while away the time, when the talk flags, with a tune on his flute;—one by one, these members of the doomed ship's company appear before us again: fold by fold, the snowy veil wreathed over them is melted from view, and the dead and gone come back to us for a little while from the icy keeping of Death.

The journal, so careful and so considerate in describing the officers, does not forget the men. They, too, come in for their share of kindly and clear-sighted notice.

"Our men are all fine, hearty fellows, mostly north-countrymen, with a few men-of-war's men. We feared at Stromness that some of them would repent, and it is usual to allow no leave—the Terror did not. But two men wanted to see—one his wife, whom he had not seen for four years, and the other his mother, whom he had not seen for seventeen—so I let them go to Kirkwall, fourteen miles off. I also allowed a man of each mess to go on shore for provisions. They all came on board to their leave; but finding we were not going to sea till the following morning, four men (who probably had taken a *leetle* too much whisky, among them was the little old man who had not seen his wife for four years) took a small boat that lay alongside, and went on shore without leave. Their absence was soon discovered, and Fairholme, assisted by Baillie, and somebody or other, brought all on board by three o'clock in the morning. I firmly believe each intended coming on board (if he had been sober enough), especially the poor man with the wife; but, according to the rules of the service, these men should have been severely

punished—one method being to stop their pay and give it to the constables, or others, who apprehended them. It struck me, however, that the punishment is intended to prevent misconduct in others, and not to revenge their individual misconduct: men know very well when they are in the wrong, and there is clearly no chance of any repetition of the offence until we get to Valparaiso, or the Sandwich Islands; so I got up at four o'clock, had everybody on deck, sent Gore and the sergeant of marines below, and searched the whole deck for spirits, which were thrown overboard. This took two good hours; soon after which we up anchor, and made sail out. I said nothing to any of them. They evidently expected a rowing, and the old man with the wife looked very sheepish, and would not look me in the face; but nothing more was said, and the men have behaved not a bit the worse ever since."

Was this wise forbearance, this merciful interpretation of the true end of punishment, tenderly remembered, on both sides, when officers and men lay helpless together, waiting for their long release, in the voiceless and lifeless solitudes of the North? Even such a trifle as the memory of what had happened at Stromness might have helped to soothe the last moments of some among the lost men when the end was near at hand. We may at least hope and believe that it might have been so.

The journal which has, thus far, mainly occupied itself with life and character on board the *Erebus*, goes on to narrate the various events and changes of weather which accompanied the progress of the ships on the fatal northward voyage. On the 11th and 12th of June, the wind is high—the colour of the sea is "a beautiful, delicate, cold-looking green"—"long rollers, as if carved out of the essence of glass bottles," swell onwards in grand procession, meeting the vessels. The rate of sailing is so rapid, with the high wind in their favour, that they get within six miles of Iceland. On the 14th the rain pours down and the fogs close round them. The *Erebus* sails on through the dense obscurity, with the *Terror* on one side, and the transport on the other, all three keeping close together for fear of losing each other. On this day the officers amuse themselves by arranging their books, and find to their satisfaction that they can produce a very sufficient library. Ice-master Reid comes out in his quaint experienced way with a morsel of useful information on the subject of cookery. He sees the steward towing some fish overboard to try and get a little of the salt out of it; roars out sarcastically, "What are you making faces at there? That's not the way to get the salt out;" and instructs the steward to boil the fish first, and then to take it off the fire and keep it just not boiling. It is Saturday night when Reid sets matters right with the salt fish; and he and Purser Osmar socially hob-and-nob together, drinking the favourite sea-toast of Sweethearts and Wives, and asking Captain Fitzjames to join them. He, poor fellow, meets them with his light-

hearted joke, in return—says he has not got a sweetheart and does not want a wife—and ends the entry in his journal, for that day, by writing "good night" to his dear friends in England.

On the 16th it is calm enough to allow of a boat visit to the *Terror*. On the 17th the night is cloudy, with a bright light on the horizon to the north-east, which Gore thinks is the *Aurora Borealis*. Practical Reid, with his old whaling experience, calls it ice-blink. Captain Fitzjames says it is the reflexion of sunset, and likens the effect of it to a large town on fire twenty miles off. On the 18th, they make a catalogue of their little library; and, remembering that it is "Waterloo Day," drink the Duke of Wellington's health at Sir John Franklin's table. On this day, also, the "crow's nest" is completed. It is usually "a cask, lined with canvas, at the fore-topmast head, for a man to stand in to look out for channels in the ice;" on board the *Erebus*, however, it is "a sort of canvas cylinder, hooped." Ice-master Reid is to be perched up in this observatory, and criticises it, with his north-country eye on the main chance, as "a very expensive one." At ten at night—the time which, allowing for difference of longitude, answers to half-past seven in London—Captain Fitzjames takes a glass of brandy-and-water, in honour of his own anticipated promotion at the brevet of the 18th, which has been talked of in England. He pleases himself with the idea that he is taking an imaginary glass of wine with Mr. and Mrs. Coningham, at that moment; and, while he is telling them this in the journal, Reid comes in, and sees him writing as usual. "Why, Mister Jems," says the surprised ice-master, perplexedly scratching his head, "you never seem to me to sleep at all; you're always writin'!" On the 21st the ships are in Davis's Straits; bottle-nose whales are plunging and tumbling all round them; and tree-trunks, with the bark rubbed off by the ice, are floating by. The next day is Sunday: it is blowing hard, and the ships are rolling prodigiously; but they contrive to struggle through the Church service on the lower deck. The 23rd brings a downright gale; the dinner-party in Sir John's cabin is obliged to be given up, the host finding that his guests cannot combine the two actions of holding on and eating and drinking at the same time. The next day is calmer; and the Arctic cold begins to make itself so sensibly felt, that the ship's monkey is obliged to be clothed in a blanket, frock, and trousers, which the sailors have made for her. On the 25th, they sight the coast of Greenland, "rugged, and sparkling with snow." The sea is now of a delicate blue in the shadows, and so calm that "the *Terror's* mast-heads are reflected close alongside, though she is half a mile off. The air is delightfully cool and bracing, and everybody is in good-humour either with himself or his neighbours. Captain Fitzjames has been on deck all day, taking observations. Goodsir is catching the most extraordinary animals in a net, and is in ecstasies. Gore and Des Vœux are over the side, poking with nets and long poles, with

eigars in their mouths, and Osmar laughing." Captain Fitzjames is weary and sleepy with his day's work; but he will not go to bed until he has written these few lines in his journal, because this is the memorable day on which the voyagers have first seen the Arctic land.

On the 27th, they are all enlivened by an unexpected visit at sea. The skipper of a Shetland brig comes on board. He is up in these high latitudes on a fishing speculation, and he has presented himself to shake hands with the little old man who went to visit his wife at Stromness, and who had once been mate on board the brig. On the 29th they pass some grand icebergs, which do not look, as we all suppose, like rocks of ice, but like "huge masses of pure snow, furrowed with caverns and dark ravines." The 1st of July brings the ships within a day's sail of Whalefish Islands, at which place the transport is to be unloaded of her provisions and coals, and left to return to England. On the evening of that day, there are sixty-five icebergs in sight; and the vessels sail in "among a shoal of some hundred walruses, tumbling over one another, diving and splashing with their fins and tails, and looking at the ships with their grim, solemn-looking countenances and small heads, bewhiskered and be-tusked." On the 2nd, they find themselves in a fog, "right under a dense, black-looking coast topped with snow." This is Disco, a Danish settlement. The scenery is grand, but desolate beyond expression. At midnight, Captain Fitzjames finds Purser Osmar on deck, cheerfully dancing with an imaginary skipping-rope. "What a happy fellow you are," says Captain Fitzjames; "always in good humour." "Well, sir," answers cheerful Osmar, "if I am not happy here, I don't know where else I could be." The 4th finds them safe in their temporary haven at the Whalefish Islands. The next day, every man is on shore, "running about for a sort of holiday, getting eider ducks' eggs, curious mosses and plants, and shells." It is warm enough again, now, for the mosquitoes to be biting. During this fine weather, the transport will probably be unloaded, either on Monday the 7th, or Tuesday the 8th; and on the 9th or 10th, the two Discovery Ships will perhaps be on their way to Lancaster Sound. It is reported that this is the mildest and earliest summer known in those regions, and that the ice is clear all the way through the coming voyage. Guided by Sir John Franklin's experience, the officers expect to reach Lancaster Sound as soon as the 1st of August; but this information is not to be generally communicated in England from the fear of making the public too sanguine about the season. Captain Fitzjames's own idea is that they have "a good chance of getting through this year, if it is to be done at all;" but he is himself privately inclined to hope that no such extraordinary luck may happen to them, as he wants "to have a winter for magnetic observations."

With this little outbreak of professional enthusiasm, and with this description of the future

prospects of the expedition, the deeply-interesting narrative draws to a close. Its few concluding lines are thus expressed:

"Your journal is at an end, at least for the present. I do hope it has amused you, but I fear not; for what can there be in an old tub like this, with a parcel of sea-bears, to amuse a 'lady fair?' This, however, is a *façon de parler*, for I think, in reality, that you will have been amused in some parts and interested in others, but I shall not read back, for fear of not liking it, and tearing it up."

Those are the last words. They are dated Sunday, the 6th of July, 1845. Five days later, on the 11th, Captain Fitzjames sends a letter to his friend, with the journals, still dating from the Whalefish Islands. The ships are expected to sail on the night of the 12th for Lancaster Sound. If no tidings are received in England before the June of the next year, letters are to be despatched, on the chance of reaching those to whom they are addressed, to Petro Paulowski, in Kamschatka. The closing sentence in the letter is, "God bless you and everything belonging to you." Those simple, warm-hearted words are the last that reach us, before the endless and the awful silence that follows. With "God bless you and all belonging to you," the two ships' companies drift away from us into the frozen seas. The little flicker of light that we have viewed them by for a moment, dies out, and the long night falls darkly between us and them—the night whose eternal morning dawns in the glory of another world.

TE DEUM!

'Tis noonday. On Italian plains

I look to see the ripening corn

Shoot sunward all its spears, the vine
Adown the hill-sides wreathes and twine;

And peasants bred and born
Among the plains, among the hills,
The valleys, with their singing rills,
I turn expectant eyes to see,
Crying aloud, on bended knee,

"Thanks to the living God!"

What meets my eye? Fair corn-fields red,

But not with flush of summer sun,

Nor blaze of poppies.—Men lie dead
By hundreds—thousands—every one

Ghastly and gory, and the sod
Sends up a reek of human blood
Redder than grape-blood; moans and cries
Of men in hopeless agonies

Rise up through the polluted air,
Rise up to Heaven, but who cries there
"Thanks to the living God!"

I see a city wide and fair;
Through the broad streets a pageant goes,
And men shout loud, and women smile,
And up the chill and solemn aisle
Of a cathedral onward flows
A proud procession.—Priestly men,
Whose trade is prayer and peace, and then
A fair-haired woman, whose dark eyes
Seem full of saddened memories,
Assumes the imperial chair.
They kneel, and through the fluttering air

Melodious thunder swells and rolls,
And from that mass of human souls
Bursts forth—because those men afar
Were slaughtered in a bloody war—
“Thanks to the living God!”

EUROPEAN MUTINY IN INDIA.

I AM a merchant in a flourishing way of business, and within the past ten years I have sat for a borough in Parliament. Five-and-twenty years ago I was a private soldier in the Bengal Horse Artillery. I, therefore, feel that I have a right to say something touching the recent mutiny of the late East India Company's regiments serving in Bengal.

I am not about to defend the men, but to state a few facts that may possibly extenuate the offence of which they have been guilty.

The bulk of the English journals that have commented on this important question have either not comprehended it, or else, in a praiseworthy spirit of loyalty, have been led to indulge in expressions undeservedly harsh.

Now, *what* is the question? It is this. Had the Government the right, by a stroke of the pen, to transfer a large body of troops from the service of the East India Company to that of the Crown, in the same way that live stock is frequently sold with an estate? Had *Parliament* the right? I deny the right, and I am not ashamed to say that had I been serving in my old brigade when “*the order*” went forth, I should have stated quietly and calmly what I am now about to state; and if I had not been listened to, I should have joined those who refused to obey the roll call.

“Then you would have been a rebel!” some testy old gentleman or inconsiderate young man may exclaim.

Listen! As soon as I became of age I was entitled to several thousand pounds, which were duly handed over to me, on demand, by the executors of my late father's will. (My father was an opulent corn-factor in the north of England. He died leaving fifty thousand pounds to be divided amongst his ten children, of whom I was the fifth son.) I was not very long in “running through” my patrimony, and perpetrated many acts of folly, of which I have since duly repented. My means of living exhausted, I became a perfect nuisance to my relations; for my habits were such that, as soon as I was possessed of money, I spent it in taverns. At length they denied me admittance to their houses, and took no notice of me when they saw me in the streets. With a few sovereigns in my pocket (a donation from one of my sisters, on the condition that I would leave my native town), I came to London to seek employment. Whilst thinking, in various public-houses, what employ I might be really fit for, my sister's gift dwindled away, till I was left with only ninepence. In that frame of mind which generally attends upon persons in the circumstances I have described, I was passing the Horse Guards, when my attention was attracted by a placard

on the walls. It was headed: “Wanted, for the East India Company's Horse Artillery, a few Young Men.” As soon as I had read the placard I made up my mind to enlist, and go to India. As I am about six feet two in height, and was not at all bad looking, I dare say I might have been admitted into the Blues or the Life Guards. But, I would have perished rather than have done so, for in all probability I should have been recognised, some day or other, by those who had known me in the days of my prosperity; and had the truth come to the knowledge of my sisters, for whom I had a great affection, it would have pained them exceedingly to hear that I was a private soldier.

I sought the sergeant to whom reference was made in the placard, and, that very afternoon, I took “the shilling,” and became, to every intent and purpose, a soldier in the *East India Company's service*. What was really the oath I took, I know not; but, whatever it was, it was what it has always been regarded, as—so far as serving as a soldier was concerned—a matter of form. My compact was to serve in the East, and not elsewhere. To serve the king in the East: that is to say, to fight the enemies of the British Government, I should have had no objection; but to serve the king generally, to go to the colonies if required, or be brought back with a regiment to England, I would not have undertaken upon any consideration, for the reasons I have already assigned.

On my arrival in India I was “drafted,” and sent up the country to Meerut, where I joined the brigade. To my joy, as well as to my surprise, I found that the bulk of the men were well-informed, respectable persons. Many of them had, like myself, enjoyed a position in the middle class of society, and had received a good education. Some few were the sons of baronets, and we had more than one aristocrat in the ranks. I say it, without any intention to offend the brave soldiers who serve the Crown, that the great body of the Company's army was composed of men of a very superior stamp to the great body of the royal army. I do not mean to say that intelligent and educated men are not to be found in the royal army, but that they are not so commonly found—nothing like it—as in the late Company's European army, and more especially in the artillery.

I had not been very long with the brigade before several men who belonged to my troop were selected to fill sundry appointments which became vacant. One, became a cattle sergeant; another, went into the commissariat department; another, into the barrack department; another, into the Surveyor-General's department; and so on. These appointments were not only well paid, but they rendered the men who held them extremely comfortable. Each man had a bungalow to himself, could afford to keep a pony and a couple of servants, and, what is more, marry, and have his little family about him. These were the prizes which were open to all men serving in the ranks of the East India Company's European army. (There were no

such prizes for men in the royal army. Not even the officers of that army were eligible for staff employ.) So long as a man conducted himself with sobriety and integrity in these appointments there was no chance of his being "remanded to his regiment." He was there for life, or until he pleased to become a pensioner.

Had it, in those days, been proposed to hand over the men of the Company's European army to the royal army, or to deprive them of the privileges that belonged to their branch of the service, there would have been a mutiny to a certainty; and I speak from experience when I say that the *officers* of the Company's army, native and European, would have sympathised with the men; for, they would have regarded the measure as the first step towards depriving *themselves* of those privileges which they looked upon as vested rights. Who can forget the clamour that the Company's officers made, when Lord Hardinge appointed the late Captain S. Fisher, of her Majesty's 3rd Dragoons, to the command of a regiment of Irregular Cavalry? The murmurs of these gentlemen flooded the correspondence columns of all the newspapers in India, and, unless I am mistaken, they petitioned against this "innovation;" it is well known that the Court of Directors, when, out of respect to Lord Hardinge, they sanctioned the appointment, expressed their disapproval thereof, and hoped that "the rules of the service" would not be again violated.

Now, although the rebellion of 1857 completely altered the state of affairs, and rendered it prudent that the empire should be held in the name of the Crown, I maintain that it did not alter the rights of any man—I care not what his rank may have been—in the service of the East India Company. When poor old John Company died, his old servants, one and all, had the option to serve its successor in the East, or not, according to the bent of individual inclination. Old John had no more power to will and bequeath them, than I have the power to will and bequeath my domestic servants to my son after my decease. And when Lord Clyde promulgates that "no one can disobey an act of Parliament," I desire to ask what House of Commons would ever dream of converting a British subject into a mere chattel? As well might Parliament have passed an act that when the Crown bought from the Peninsular and Oriental Company, that magnificent steam-ship the Himalaya, all her crew, from Captain Kellock down to the cabin-boys, were to belong to the Royal Navy, and serve therein, without being asked even, whether it would be agreeable for them to do so! I have a great respect for Lord Clyde, and no one can admire more than I do the tact he has exhibited in order to quell this serious outbreak; but, when his lordship speaks of "the act affecting all grades equally," I must, with all due deference, dispute the truth of that proposition; I would urge, too, that the remark itself shows that the men were not properly dealt with, since it admits that all the

servants of the Company, from the highest to the lowest, had equal rights with respect to future service. The officer, civil or military in India (or in England for that matter), may resign the service whenever he chooses. He has simply to send in his "papers" (if a military man), or his "resignation" (if a civilian), and he is released from servitude as a matter of course. It is not so with the private soldier. If the Company's European troops had once gone over to the Crown, by order, there would have been an end to any remonstrance afterwards. Not so with their officers. The very day after they had read to the men the Proclamation by the Governor-General of India, they might have requested permission to retire, and it would have been granted. And so with a magistrate, or collector, or judge in the service of the late East India Company.

I have confined my remarks to what I consider was the right of the European soldier in the late East India Company's army. So far as the prudence of denying that he had such right is concerned, there can be no question that it was a most ill-advised measure; and when the point was referred to the home authorities, it should have been strongly recommended by the Governor-General that it ought to be yielded. The idea that 50,000, should be suffered, under such peculiar circumstances, to imperil, for a second time, the existence of British rule in India, says very little for the wisdom of those entrusted with the management of affairs in the East.

The Times, in an able article on the question, well remarked, as to this part of the case (namely, the prudence of the measure), that the bounty might have been gracefully bestowed as a reward for, or in recognition of, the meritorious services so recently performed by the men who claimed it. The danger of not complying with this reasonable demand of the men, so respectfully urged in the first instance, ought to have been apparent; and it is impossible to praise Lord Clyde too highly for the sagacious manner in which he behaved, when the disastrous news reached him at Simlah. Who shall say what would have been the consequence had any of the recusants been fired upon? We should have had, not only a vast number of our own countrymen (all trained soldiers and inured to the climate) up in arms against us; but, every native rebel chief and all their retainers, whom those very men helped to subdue, espousing the cause of the men, with the ultimate object of serving their own great end—the overthrow of British rule in India.

FIRST-FLOOR WINDOWS.

I AM not one of those impertinent modern devils upon two sticks—the men upon stilts. I am not a window-cleaner (fearful trade!), a house-painter, nor a performer on the acrobatic "perch," but simply an omnibus traveller through the London streets, who always prefers to sit outside. I spend much time and money on the top of these useful vehicles, and I never attempt to secure

the box seat. I never smoke, and I have, therefore, no cigars to offer to the driver; I know nothing of horses, and my conversational powers are, therefore, too limited for a box-seat passenger. My place is the knife-board; and there I sit, watching those two intelligent eyes of every passing household—the first-floor windows—not offensively, I hope: not pryingly, I know: but lazily, and, perhaps, reflectively, like a boy who olts into London from some pleasant country road in summer, lying face downwards on a carted bed of tares.

From this position I have seen you, fattest of fat men, dweller in that old English fourteenth-century house, with the pointed roof, in one of the main thoroughfares. I have watched you on a sultry June morning, perhaps, before business hours, squeezed through that small, overhanging first-floor window, smoking that heavy meerschaum pipe, whose bowl hung dangling almost upon the hats of the passers-by. I have gazed upon you as you leaned forward, without any regard to the antique building that sustained you, until I thought the whole bulging fabric would have fallen, in powdered feebleness, into the street. The small low hut, or shop, immediately under your folded arms, in whose doorway a little child could scarcely stand upright, has sunk in on one side, like a hat that has been sat upon in a railway carriage. Is it with the weight of your vast bulk? for so it appears to me.

How often, too, have I seen you, rosy-cheeked shopboy, standing upon the leaden ledge of that shop to clean these first-floor windows? Why is the little maid-of-all-work (and no play) sent to clean the inside of the glass, while you are polishing the outside? Is it out of kindness, to give her some glimpses of a holiday? Of course, the task is a long while in hand, and many customers' parcels below are waiting to be taken out; for window-cleaning, by two such labourers, includes a good deal of face-making and face-dodging through the glass, besides a little romping and flirtation. The wash-leather drops (quite accidentally) into the street, and has to be picked up by another boy, who enviously watches the whole proceedings from the pavement below. Perhaps he is a rival suitor for the hand of the young Cinderella above, who looks upon him, with her nose flattened against the window-pane. Crash goes the glass, as a matter of course, and the timid youth in the street decamps like a young deer. Will the faithful swain on the shop-ledge take the blame boldly upon himself, and be haunted by a phantom tenpence which is always going to be stopped out of his wages? Perhaps.

How many first-floor windows have I seen that are covered with large effigies of teapots, dustpans, and Wellington boots? Trade is a wise, a profitable, and an honourable thing; but it ought to be confined to the shop. If I took tea in drawing-rooms over tea-warehouses, hardware-warehouses, and boot-warehouses, I should not like to see the shadow of some great property

emblem of my entertainer's trade cast across the table, while the substance obscured, at once, the prospect and the light. Next to a shark, or some other sea-monster, peeping into my cabin porthole, I should object to a gigantic dust-pan, or a body-bath, across my first-floor window.

I have often passed by that large chapel-like first-floor window over a tavern, and well I know to what it leads. Long-room, or club-room; faded piano in corner, horsehair seats all round the wall; smell of beer and tobacco; sawdust and sand; crossed pipes on tables; canopy at the end (like the theatrical tent of Richard the Third on Bosworth Field), the seat of the Perpetual Grand President of the United Order of Provident Tipplers. Prudence is good in fathers of families, especially when influencing a taste for gin-and-water. There is something dry and sepulchral about savings banks. Nothing like a tavern fund, with a tavern treasurer, and tavern conviviality over the periodical payments—to diminish the savings.

A short length of aristocratic by-street and canaries swinging in cages, give place to window conservatories, aquariums, small household jungles; pretty little boxes of imported nature made to order in a pretty artificial manner, like a waterfall at a public exhibition. All the life in the street is shut out by shrubs in which snakes may have crept, and through which no vulgar, inquiring gaze can penetrate. No matter. Pass on to the next.

A sulky, frowning individual is standing, with his hands in his pockets, full between the snow-flaked muslin curtains, lowering at the world. There may be a skeleton of temper in this particular house; but it is hardly wise to dance its bony legs in public.

Take a lesson from your next-door neighbour, whose feelings are soothed by playing upon the harp; as he seems to tell us by displaying the instrument so fully in the window. Past several China jars, between rich ruby curtains; past another conservatory, thinly planted, in which the Hon. Mr. Romeo is paying his received attentions to the Hon. Miss Juliet; and a sudden turn of the vehicle plunges us amidst another layer of first-floor windows.

Still the same sick paralysed child, whose bed has been behind that curtain for so many years; whose face never seems to grow any larger, and who is always playing, in summer, with that parched and sun-dried box of mignonette. Still the same vacant, gaping empty rooms to let, through which you can see the walls in the close yards at the back. Still the same slovenly, broken, lop-sided Venetian blinds, barely covering the dirty windows, which open on rooms whose picture it is not difficult to draw. Threads upon the floor, saucepans upon the hearth-rugs, kettles upon the tables, women in curl-papers in the afternoon, and generally nothing but yellowness, dirt, and rags. One change has come over the first-floor windows of the street, and that is where a new inhabitant—a refugee—sticking up a board in his cheap apartments, announcing

that he teaches Syriac, coolly intimates his desire to be starved to death.

Another turn of the vehicle, and we are in a leading thoroughfare once more.

How many tradespeople has royalty appointed, from time to time, and empowered to raise the national coat-of-arms between their first-floor windows? And, when raised, do they make the gooseberries larger, the meat sweeter, the bread purer? One house of business that boasts the sign of distinguished patronage is proud of concealing every sign of its trade. Not a shred, not a patch, not an atom of anything shows itself either in the first-floor windows or any others. There is no name over the doorway to distinguish the house from a club-house, a public institution, a government office, a place for weighing money or trying guns, a Trinity-house (whatever that may be), or even a family mansion of sober aspect. Looking more closely at the building, you see the name of "Benbows" in small letters, and that is all the vulgar publicity which this distinguished house requires. It is its pride to be known as Benbows—nothing more. If any dwellers in England are not acquainted with Benbows, they argue themselves unknown. I have just heard that Benbows is an upholsterer. Thank you.

That is a quiet first-floor window, with its neat, short Venetian blinds (like a window in a clean Dutch picture), where the bust of Galen looks down complacently upon a nursemaid showing, to a sturdy infant, the passing coaches. Below, there is plenty of brimstone and treacle to last the child its life, for its father is a chemist; and, though some people may affect to call him a poor apothecary (after Shakespeare), his profits are greater than many surgeons', and his sitting-rooms have all the prim severity of a physician's study.

How often have I passed and repassed you, serenest and stoutest of womankind, to find you growing more stout and more serene every time I see you? You have retired from business, which is very wise; but still you sit over it, which is wiser still. While the human ants are busy in your thriving hosier's shop below, while you can hear the profitable tramp of feet, and even the chink of money on the counters, you have nothing to do but to watch the street traffic, and devour the periodical literature of your country. Of course you took your late husband's foreman into partnership, which accounts for the "Co." that is added to the familiar name, and for the leisure you are enjoying as the representative of capital.

Past those dusty ground-glass windows that hide the stooping law writers; past first-floor windows full of shirt-collars; past others full of strange-shaped monsters that are made of india-rubber, and warranted waterproof; past others full of gigantic toys that drive young passengers frantic, and large open-mouthed masks through which the professional pantomimist must surely leap, in spite of the whole available body of real policemen; past the watchmaker's over a pastry-cook's, where a number of grave-looking men

are looking through the shortest of telescopes, apparently watching the tart-eaters below; past what looks like a public picture-gallery, but which is a fine art sale-room; and past a first-floor window, standing between two polished columns of the colour of raspberry jam, high up above the opposite house-tops.

Down again from this long-legged looking specimen of the revived Babylonian, or trading palatial style of architecture, to an accessible first-floor window of a common barber's shop, wherein is the living picture of the lathered lamb awaiting the sacrifice. The operator is sharpening his razor on a hanging strap that is near the window, and is telling that old, old story, of which the weather forms the most noticeable part.

How often have I seen that young Juliet at No. 4, and that young Romeo at No. 5, sitting, back to back, in adjoining houses; each reading a book, and each unconscious of the other's presence; both evidently formed for each other, and yet never destined to come together; each going down the narrow, separate pathways of life, that never meet, and yet being only divided by a two-foot brick wall?

The first-floor windows of my theatre make me melancholy, because they lie at the back, and are always filled with wretched fragments of paper, boards, and scenery, instead of glass.

The first-floor window of my parish church (the first-floor over the gravestones) never pleases me on a working-day, because I look through the dingy glass (we have a horror of coloured devices at our establishment), and see a female pew-opener standing in the pulpit, dusting the featherbed cushions, and a common charwoman mopping the ten commandments.

The first-floor windows of my workhouse—that is, the workhouse which I help to support by paying heavy poor's-rates—always annoy me, because, at whatever hour of the night or morning I happen to pass them, they are lighted up throughout the whole length and breadth of the building, as if for some great midnight orgie.

IN CHARGE.

SECOND AND LAST FLIGHT.

I HAVE scarcely been more than half an hour on board the *Niger*, when my ideas of nautical life (derived, I am bound to say, from observation of transpontine dramas, and a diligent perusal of the works of the late Captain Marryat) receive a tremendous shock. For I am just beginning to revel in a new sensation of cleanliness and the long lost delight of fresh linen, and I have climbed up on my berth and am looking out through the round bull's-eye window at the white-faced houses and snow-covered hills of Marseilles which are rapidly disappearing, when a steward, knocking at my door, tells me that breakfast is served, and that the captain is but waiting my coming to commence. The captain! I picture him at once! Five foot four, fifty years of age, cocked-hat on his head, red face, black mutton-chop whiskers, hoarse voice,

swears a good deal, rum in his tea, speaking-trumpet at his elbow, loblolly-boy (never knew what that was!) at his beck and call, martinet, disciplinarian, ready to put anybody in irons who sneezes. I am astonished to find, seated at the end of the table and busily engaged in preparing tea, a tall gentleman of two or three and thirty, wearing beard and moustache; of frank, unassuming, mild manners, perfectly polished, courteous, and well-bred; no cocked-hat, no speaking-trumpet, no rum; plenty of conversation on all kinds of subjects, political, social, literary—everything but nautical; well up in all questions and books of the day, seen strange places and a close observer, speaks with great fluency and in well-chosen terms. No belayings, no timber-shiverings, no running over at the lee-scuppers, nothing of the kind!

The passengers are supposed to have breakfasted at their hotels before coming on board, so the captain and I have the cabin to ourselves until we are joined by the purser: by whom, also, I am considerably astonished. According to the authorities of naval fiction, my purser ought not to be as he is, very much bronzed, very much bearded, very blue-eyed and merry-faced, very much given to comic stories and pleasant harmless satire; but, if my recollection serves me right, ought to be a hard, bilious, saturnine, not to say Scotch gentleman, infallible in the matter of statistics, a dead hand at accounts, a salt-water Cocker, or a sea-going Joseph Hume.

After breakfast I go on deck to smoke a cigar. My friend, the purser, emerges from his cabin and invites me to enter. This pleasant retreat is about five feet square, and is so filled by a bed, a camp-stool, a shelf, a flap-table, and three or four gigantic ledgers, that there is barely room for two persons to sit in it together.

When the door is shut, I lose sight of the purser in the cloud of tobacco-smoke which fills the place. He is companionable and jovial, has been everywhere:—on the China station, on the Calcutta line, for a short time in a house of business at Shanghai, is now going backwards and forwards between Marseilles and Alexandria, has no notion where he may be next month; perhaps where he is, perhaps on a voyage to Sydney. Such a life robs him of all interest in the future, and makes him look at the present but as a period to be got over in the pleasantest manner possible; every ten days he changes the entire set of people whom it is his duty and his pleasure to serve and render comfortable; and so long as the passengers have not to complain of the accommodation of the Company, nor the Company of the non-payment on the part of the passengers, his mission in life is fulfilled.

It is, indeed, a wonderful existence, looked at in any light; but, to a man accustomed to hard mental labour for ten hours out of the twenty-four, it becomes pleasantly marvellous. You have heard of the *dolce far niente*, of the glorious, happy-to-day-let-to-morrow-take-care-of-itself life of the couchant water-melon eating, passer-by-chaffing, nothing-doing Italian lazzarone, but believe me it is nothing to the delicious

lassitude enjoyed by a man of business on his first trip to the East. He has nothing to do, and he does it thoroughly; his goods and luggage are safely stowed away, he has a ticket for them, and knows he will find them at the end of his voyage; where also he knows he will find his mercantile matters, his agency, his wife, his judgship, his Bogglywallah collector's berth, his anything that he is going for; but towards the realisation of which worrying himself on board will not help him one atom. Therefore, if he be wise, he will not worry himself at all, but will rise early and get an early turn in the bath-house, will have a splendid appetite for breakfast at nine, will smoke his cigar and lounge about the deck until tiffin at twelve, will smoke another cigar, lie down on the cabin skylight under the pleasant awning, and perhaps fall asleep, only giving himself time to wash his hands before dinner at four; will form one of the little smoking party seated on camp-stools just out of the wind and under the lee of the funnel, who allow the tea-bell at seven o'clock to pass by without notice, and who do not break up until a sharp tintinabulum at nine proclaims that grog sparkles on the cabin board, and that the purser's brandy and rum are ruby bright.

When I describe a certain passenger on board, by saying that his was the first laugh heard every day; that no amount of bad weather, or pitching and rolling, made him ill; that he played the fiddle and the piano equally rapidly, equally badly, and equally by ear; that he would have played the kettle-drums, and the Apollonicon, if we had had them on board; that he never left the side of the prettiest lady of our party whenever she appeared on deck, but, without being the least obtrusive, was always handy and attentive; that he told the best stories of steeple-chasing at home and tiger-hunting in India; and that every mortal thing he did, whether he laughed, played the fiddle or piano, strolled up and down the deck, handed shawls and wraps, placed lounging-chairs, or told apocryphal stories, was all done as though his sole object, intent, and aim, were to please this self-same prettiest lady—when I have said all this, it is, I am sure, needless to observe that the passenger was an Irishman. Twenty years baking in Ceylon and Calcutta, to which latter place he is returning after a short visit at home, has not taken the national spirit out of my friend of the Niger.

Who is this that cometh, in a long black robe reaching to his heels, and fastened down the middle with small purple buttons, and round the waist with a purple cord and tassels, who beareth a black silk skull-cap fitting tightly over his crisp iron-grey hair, who is so fat of face, so rotund of corporation, so thoroughly genial, not to say jolly, in look, aspect, and demeanour? This is a French Roman Catholic bishop, Monseigneur l'Evêque de Biblos, in Cochinchina, whither he is proceeding; and a kinder-hearted, better, pleasanter man I will defy you to produce. No matter what the state of the

weather may be, every morning before breakfast you will find him, with one of his chaplains, a sharp-faced, wiry little man, pacing up and down the deck, breviary in hand, looking out straight before them, seeing no one, but avoiding outstretched legs, &c., in the most dexterous manner, and to all appearance praying most fervently. With equal certainty you may calculate on finding them, for the first half-hour after breakfast, walking sharply up and down, side by side, the one smoking a large meerschaum pipe, the other a cheroot, and carrying on a most animated conversation in a most barbarous unknown tongue. Both the bishop and the chaplain have for a long time been missionaries in Cochin-China (the bishop has been there, he tells me, for nearly thirty years), and both speak the language like natives; this is necessary for their protection, for, as the worthy old prelate tells me, with a smile, his life is never worth one hour's purchase when he is in his diocese, and is principally passed in concealment all day and in travelling at night, disguised in a native costume. He is not enthusiastic on the success of his mission, but is yet hopeful. He has been to France, to his society, and is returning with fresh funds and another chaplain: a wretched mortal called Father Lazarus, who is so deadly ill that it is only on the last day of the voyage that he can be dragged on deck and laid out in an easy-chair, and whom I set down, from the conversation I have with him, as thoroughly hating and fearing the new life which is opening upon him. But the bishop is splendid; to see his purple stockings skipping out of the way of the hose held by the boat-swain as they wash the decks, is a grand sight; to hear him laugh as the water accidentally splashes over his venerated person, and to see him shake his fist in pretended wrath at the offender, does one good. He is always on the look-out for a chance to join in a good-humoured jest, and is perfectly charming.

It was not until the afternoon of the second day of our departure from Marseilles that I become aware of the existence of Our Swell: a fact which is forced upon me by his calmly strolling up to the spot where I am standing smoking my cheroot, and asking me if I don't know Fibber of the Haresfoot Club? With Fibber I am acquainted, and the repetition of his name brings back reminiscences of a gas-atmospherish, club-smoking-room-frequenting, scandal-talking, ballet-ball-going, coulisse-haunting life, which are utterly at variance with the broad ocean, and perfectly new existence in which I am now revelling. I had cast my old London slough, and was rejoicing in the novelty of fresh scenes and faces, nevertheless I am anything but unwilling to make acquaintance with Our Swell, who, in his way, is one of the greatest of characters. He is a perfect type of his class; tall with good features, admirably dressed, and with a general air of lassitude and don't-careishness about him which is quite characteristic. After a short conversation I begin to revere him immensely, for he discloses

his noble name, and then I recollect that he is actually the man of whom I have so often heard. He is the great creature who, upon arriving at a railway station, and hearing that the train had gone, said to the porter, "Then bring another!" It is he who when he was asked in what branch of history, ancient or modern, he had been plucked for his army examination, said, "Oh, long before either of them, 'bout some infernal fellah called William the Conqueror;" and to him is due the noblest conundrum-answer on record, for, once appearing in a large pair of summer jean trousers, the old question was put to him, why his garments were like two French towns, he replied, "French town, my trousers! sure I don't know—something about Nankeen, I suppose!"

There is not the least superciliousness or exclusiveness about him; he is politeness itself; he worries the purser by insisting on having his breakfast in bed, and is inclined to be rebellious at not being allowed to sit up after half-past nine, when all cabin lights are extinguished; but he is a general favourite, from his soft, easy-going manners, and from his evident desire to be civil to all. The activity and bustle of the sailors cause him the greatest wonder: "he can't think how fellahs can get about so, when it's so hot." He has a very splendid meerschaum pipe, which has cost incalculable sums of money, but he is only up to Latakia and Turkish, and finding that to colour such a pipe properly requires the consumption therein of much tobacco of the coarser order, he one day goes to the stoke-hole, and, after calling loudly, "I say, you fellah!" he is answered by the apparition of a greasy, oily, black engineman, to whom he confides the cherished pipe, telling him he shall have five shillings when he brings it back duly defiled. For three days the delicate amber mouthpiece is seen at intervals between the sooty lips of the stoker, and the money is gained. His other ideas are purely swellish; he cannot recollect anybody's name, he cannot stand about without lolling, he cannot keep his hands out of his pegtop pockets, he cannot give the English language its ordinary pronunciation, but drawls and lengthens every word. And when he hears that he will have in India to parade with the cavalry regiment to which he is proceeding at five A.M., he is very nearly throwing up his commission, and returning by next ship.

Our other passengers are of the ordinary stamp; two newly married couples: one, healthy, genial, and sociable, proceeding to the Mauritius; the other, deadly ill at first, and, when recovered, unpleasantly fond, going to Calcutta; a broad-faced, good-humoured Anglicised German, bound for Alexandria to look after a runaway correspondent of his house of business; two jolly young cadets, and a Swiss emigrant with a pretty wife, make up our number. Starting from Marseilles on the Thursday morning, we do not all show at dinner until the Friday afternoon; the after-dinner deck-parade and subsequent smoking reunion beget the warmest friendship amongst us, and when, at a very early hour on

Sunday morning, we cast anchor in Valetta harbour, and I start for the shore in a government boat, with my Malta mails aboard, and the British flag flying from her stern, I am greeted by a jovial cheer from all my male fellow-passengers.

Through indigo-blue water the boat is pulled by two half-clad fellows with naked feet, and after a great deal of shouting and backing, draws up within three feet of some very slippery pointed stones, which are regarded as the landing-place of Valetta, and upon which I am requested to jump. In fear and trembling I obey, and happily land on my feet, then follow my conductor up long flights of steps, and eventually up a steep narrow street, at right angles to which I find the principal thoroughfare of the town in which the post-office is situated. Directly I get within reach of the building my official capacity is renescent within me. I lose my slouching walk, my indolent manner, my travelled lassitude; starch seems spontaneously to bud in my shirt collar, and buckram to generate in the seams of my coat. I am on my native foolscap, and my name is M'Gillott. So, being in this frame of mind, I scrutinise rigidly the exterior of the Malta post-office, and find it an agreeable mixture of the Italian palazzo and Thames-street warehouse styles of architecture. Ascending three mouldy steps I come upon a large broad staircase, in different portions of which three men, in various stages of mouldiness, with cigarettes in their mouths, are practically making a jocose comment upon the large placard, "Smoking not allowed," which stares on them from the walls, and at the top I find an office which has evidently suffered from the relaxing effect of the climate, and which, though perfectly useful, is not sufficiently British for one in my present state of mind. For, I connect business with Britain, and cannot dis sever the idea. I do not believe in French banks where there are no shovels, no drawers full of notes, no piles of sovereigns, no big ledgers, no Stationers' Almanack, no Kelly's Directory; I do not believe in German post-offices where the tariff is written in ink, where the clerks smoke cigars as they sort the letters, and where you push your despatch and receive your change under a small arch in a wirework fence; I do not believe in the attempt at a British post-office in Constantinople where a Janissary has to stand with a stick to whack the hands of the Turks who *will* scramble for the letters indiscriminately; and even at Malta, which presents the nearest approach to the business aspect at home, I wanted more lion and unicorn, more mahogany graining, more brass lettering, more scarlet-coating, more ceremonial, more unapproachableness.

I am not prepared to say much about Malta, for my stomach, which has done me yeoman's service since we started, and is constantly to be relied on at sea, rebels the instant I set foot on shore, and I have scarcely walked a yard before the steep hills of Valetta rise to greet me, and the quaint, half-Moorish, half-Spanish, white, picturesque houses bow down to me on either

side. In a word, I turn deadly sick, and so continue during the six hours I pass on shore; yet in those six hours I see nearly all that is worth seeing, I imagine, for, accompanied by the Postmaster-General of the island, an old colleague and chum, I stroll through the principal streets, and have scarcely started before I find how false have been my original impressions of the place. I have pictured it to myself as wholly Anglicized, as an Italian version of the English quarter of Boulogne, and am most agreeably disappointed. What though English inscriptions appear in every other shop, what though from each drinking-house we pass come, even at that early hour, shouts of naval songs attributable to the pen of Charles Dibdin and other equally patriotic but far less spirit-stirring bards; the names inscribed over each shop, the wares exhibited in their windows, and the natives presiding behind the counters, are purely and entirely foreign. John Bull does not lurk in Giovanni Pace', nor does Jones lie hid in Gaetano Schembri, lovely coral of the most flowing red, or, better still, of the palest pink, silver filagree ornaments of the finest workmanship, lace of the rarest quality, these are not the wares which Jenkins vends! Smout, of the Livery of the Haberdashers' Company, and of 1066 Great Lounge-street, would as soon think of serving his customers in the scarlet coat and tops in which on "off days" he follows the Queen's hounds, as of appearing before them in the gold ear-rings, variegated shirt-front, red neckerchief, and slashed jacket of maroon-coloured velvet worn by Luigi Portelli! It is Sunday, and the streets, narrow, steep, and ill-paved, are thronged with an idle, lounging, picturesque crowd; beggars, with the least possible clothing of the filthiest rags, are lying against the walls, basking in the sunshine and apparently perfectly indifferent to being walked over; vagabond dogs with protruding tongues, unpleasantly suggestive of hydrophobia, cast furtive glances at the naked calves of the native boatmen as they pass, and are seemingly only prevented by the encrustation of dirt from making a rabid dash at them; beefy-faced, bullet-headed, stolid-looking English soldiers move here and there among the crowd, in face, figure, and general aspect a curious contrast to the swarthy-skinned, snaky-eyed, lithe-limbed Maltese.

Passing through the town, and noticing in the jeweller's shops all my ship-companions engaged in bargaining (for it is as incumbent on the visitor to purchase coral and silver filagree at Malta, as it is to buy Maids-of-Honour at Richmond, inlaid ware at Tunbridge, or yellow slippers at Margate), we come to the barracks: a range of white-faced buildings standing unprotected in the glaring, scorching sun—it is now March, what will it be in July?—and thence to some pretty, elevated gardens, known, if I remember rightly, as the ramparts, whence there is a lovely view of the town and the harbour, and where we find a little old gentleman in naval uniform and cap, strolling up and down

followed by a splendid Newfoundland dog. This old gentleman, to whom I am presented, was but eighteen months ago the terror of the Russian navy, and promised, had he had the opportunity, to have rivalled the fame of that Nelson of whose portrait, in his small slight figure, his silver hair cut straight across the forehead, his clear blue eye, and his tanned cheeks, he is the very counterpart. This is Lord Lyons, Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean squadron, who, I hear, is as popular as he is famous.

A message from the post-office to tell me that my mails are nearly ready to be taken "in charge" again, causes us to hurry back. I have only time for a peep into St. John's Church, and for the most cursory of glances at its noble inlaid marble floor, its splendid pillars, and its silver gates, which last were, during the war-time, painted black by the inhabitants to deceive the rapacity of the French. At the landing-place, I find the post-office boat with the mail-boxes from Malta to the East already on board; we start at once; and in a few minutes the Niger, with her deck pleasantly enveloped in a penetrating black dust—for she has been going through the operation of "coal-ing"—is once more standing out to sea.

On the third morning after leaving Malta, I am awakened at six o'clock by a continuous pattering over my head, as an accompaniment to which is sung a diabolical chorus, monotonous, protracted, apparently never ending, of "Allah-ill-lah! Allah-ill-lah!" which sounds to me so excessively Eastern, that I at once conclude we have arrived at Alexandria. Looking out through my bull's-eye porthole, I see a long low sandy shore with a few windmills in groups, a line of walls, a few sand hills, and a fraction of a harbour, at the end of which I am able to distinguish about a third of the foundation end of what is apparently a lighthouse. Dressing myself hurriedly, I go on deck, and there find, engaged in some nautical evolution which I did not understand, and therefore will not attempt to describe (I believe it had something to do with the anchor), a long line of about thirty Arabs marching in Indian file along the deck, and hauling at a rope. Dressed in the slightest possible covering, in most cases having only one robe, and that a kind of short blue cotton gown, filthy in person, hideous in feature, these wretched beings give me my first notions of the inhabitant of the East, and their dismal croaking chorus conveys to me my first impressions of the sounds of that land where the voice of the nightingale never is mute. I notice that the curse of ophthalmia, of which we have all heard, is no exaggerated fiction. I doubt whether one of the men now engaged in hauling at the rope before me has the proper sight of both eyes; the disease is visible in most of them. In some the eye is entirely gone, the lid drooping over the vacant orifice, while in others the small green fly, the destroyer, can be plainly seen busy. While I am gazing at these wretched people, I am touched on the elbow by a clerk from the Alexandrian post-office, who tells me

that I am in luck; that the homeward-bound steamer bearing my return mails has not yet been telegraphed at Suez; and that consequently I shall have time to run over to Cairo, and see the Nile and the pyramids. In five minutes I have settled my business, made over my mails to a magnificent old gentleman in a fez cap, flowing beard, blue cloth suit, and red turn up shoes, who gives me a receipt on my time-bill in Oriental characters (thereby immediately recalling the inscriptions on the Chutnee jars at home), and, in company with the Irishman, and the prettiest lady and her husband, I am being pulled rapidly towards the shore by a stalwart Egyptian boatman and his nearly naked little boy.

We land on a low, flat, sandy shore, in the midst of a crowd of dirty, lazy Arabs, facsimiles of those we have left on board, who immediately surround us and clamour for "backshish." It needs all the vigour of the Irishman's umbrella-bearing hand, and a fantasia by the present writer on the heads of the most clamorous with a carpet-bag, before we can make any progress. We have scarcely started when we are at once initiated into the manner in which public works in Egypt are carried out. The stone used in the formation of the landing-place has to be brought from some little distance; a tram-road, with a square van on it, would be employed in England for the transport; in default of such an arrangement a few hand-barrows would be found efficacious; but we meet some fifty Egyptians marching in Indian file, each bearing in his hand a small square block of stone, about fifteen pounds weight—some in front of them as though it were a trophy—and all singing the undying chorus of "Allah-ill-lah!" These blocks they deposit in order, and then leisurely return for more.

What is this tremendous cloud of dust close ahead of us, from the midst of which proceeds the most hideous noise, and wherein appears to be going on, some kind of weird combat, as human heads and bestial hoofs occasionally made themselves visible through the mist? These are the far-famed donkeys and donkey-boys of Alexandria. Charge! They are round you in a minute; wherever you turn, you see long ears or pawing hoofs! "Hallo, sir! hi, sir! take my tankey, sir! my tankey, sir, bean'ful tankey, sir! faas, sir, faas as Niger, sir!" (Name varied to suit that of ship in which you arrive.) "Hallo, sir! Go to post-office, sir! Railway, sir! Look my saddle, sir! my stirrup! His dam bad tankey, sir; lie down in sand and throw, sir, off! Hallo, sir! my tankey!" I jump on a very small animal, under a huge demi-pique saddle, and am straightway galloped off with, unresistingly. Is it? Can it be? By Jove, it is! A string of camels! Now, for the first time, I believe that I have left St. Martin's-le-Grand in London far behind, that I am in the land of the cypress and myrtle, and ready to be melted to sorrow or maddened to crime! A shower of blows on my donkey from my driver, and a storm of "Hi, hi's!" (the true Blackheath and Hamp-

stead vernacular—what a chance for an essay by a philologist on the universality of stable language!) brings us out of harm's way and camel's reach; but, as they pass, that extraordinary "gloaming," which, I believe, attacks every one on a first visit to the East, comes upon me, and I can think of nothing but the Arabian Nights, the long story-telling Scheherazade, the Caliph, Mesrour, and all that glorious tribe.

This large square of white-faced hotels is much more like Paris than Egypt, but these long-robed, turbaned Turks, these palm-trees, the water-carrier with his swollen cowskin brimming over with water, these rickety wooden sheds, this half-nude, wild-eyed, olive-skinned population, is all utterly Eastern, and arouses in one thoughts which—Hullo! a board with "Railway Station" painted on it in white letters!

The railway station is a large white-washed hall, with a wooden screen partitioned off at one end, where the solitary clerk stands smoking a cigarette, and talking a curious polyglot language. He has but little to do, for all the P. and O. Company's passengers have through-tickets, and his dealings are principally with the few clerks in mercantile houses who run between Alexandria and Cairo, and a tolerably numerous drift of Egyptians, travelling between the post and the interior villages. In the hall of the station I find nearly all the Niger's male passengers engaged in fierce bargaining with a native who has "puggery" to vend. A "puggery" is a long slip of white muslin which is bound round the hat, and formed into a fantastic bow with tails behind, very like to mutes' "weepers" at a child's funeral. It is supposed to keep out the sun, but whether it does or not, every one must have one; so to be in the fashion, I invest a shilling in this purchase (half-a-crown was the price originally asked), and thus accoutred, step on to the platform.

My friend the bishop is the only one unpugged; the episcopal shovel hat, which has replaced the silk skull-cap of the vessel, bears no white veil, and its owner, taking me by the arm, will show me all he can. And first he proposes that I throw my infidel glances upon some real Moslem ladies attached to the establishment of the Pasha, who are seated in our train. Thanks to the bishop's convoy, I walk forward, and come to a carriage, at the door of which stands a very tall black man, dressed in a blue and red uniform, with a sword by his side. Inside the carriage are some half dozen bundles of clothes, which I am told are women, but which may be anything; their heads are bandaged up in a white cloth, which is strained tightly across the forehead, and carried off in a fall down the back; up from the neck, like an exaggerated busk or stay-bone, passing diagonally across chin, mouth, and nose, is a strip of strong cane, across the end of which, just below the eyes, is drawn another piece of white linen, passing round the head and completely enveloping the lower portion of the face, so that between the two bandages, the eyes are the only

features which can be seen. Despite the severe looks of the excessively tall black man, I take a very rude but very natural stare into the carriage, but see little attractive, for even the eyes that are visible are dull, listless, and lustre-lacking, save one pair! It is a pair of long, black, almond-shaped liquid eyes—belonging to a coquette, too, for she has seen the Frank staring at her, and pretends to pull her yastmusthar more closely round her face on my side, while she puffs the smoke of her cigarette out of the opposite window. This suggests a chance of seeing her profile devoid of yastmusthar or other covering; so I walk quietly round at the back of the train, and, ensconcing myself behind the state carriage of the Pasha, which has been shunted on one side—a very gorgeous green and gold affair, luxuriously fitted up—I get a full view of my smoking beauty, and behold in her the incarnation of fat, sluggish, venal, sensual loveliness.

For miles and miles after leaving the station the railroad runs through the flattest and most uninteresting country. Immediately on starting, the scene is more animated; looking back you see the harbour and the sea; Pompey's Pillar, far away to the left; Cleopatra's Needle, and the white-faced houses, stretching out on either side the town. Then you come to vast swamps and miles of marshy ground, dotted with pools of standing water, on which are innumerable flocks of wild-fowl, marsh-hens, water-coots, and snipe. On the left hand, and parallel with the railroad, runs the Mahmoodie Canal, along the bank of which there is a constant traffic. Now, a horseman, splendidly mounted, dashes by at full speed; now, a string of heavily laden camels saunter by, or two or three foot passengers following a donkey carrying a tent—gipsies even amongst this gipsy nation! At distances of a mile, or even less, we pass a village: a collection of mud hovels of the most miserable kind, resembling nothing so much as exaggerated mud-pies made by our poor children at home, with a hole in the wall for entrance, and a hole in the circular roof to emit the smoke. About these hovels the children swarm: filthy, stunted, and wretched: lying about without the least signs of childish vivacity: listless, hollow-eyed, and shrunken-limbed. Two or three times we come upon an encampment; the chief's tent, snowy white and roomy; tethered round it, his two or three horses, his camel for burden, and, in one instance, a very large and milk-white donkey; at a little distance, a humbler brown tent for his retainers.

The heat of the sun, blazing and scorching on the roof of the carriage, is now tremendous, and the monotony of the scenery, and slowness of pace, begin to render us all irritable and bored. We have stopped at two or three stations, where we have had a change of third-class Egyptian passengers, and where itinerant vendors of drinking water in goat-skin bags have requested us to allay the pangs of thirst. At last we come to a place called Tantah, where we are destined to remain four mortal

hours! We don't know this at first; we are beguiled with delusive notions of ten minutes; we are constantly going to set off; all who have descended must get again into their seats, as we shall start immediately. But we don't start, and so at last I get out and have a conversation with the engine-driver, who is an Englishman, and who informs me, in the truest British vernacular, "That we ain't a going, and we ain't likely to go, these three hours, and its all along of the condemned Pasha and his adjective army, which isn't worth a condemnation, the whole billing of them; and he knows where to put his hand on ten Englishmen as could lick any condemned thirty of 'em. There's only one line of rail on this here condemned tramway, that's what he calls it, for it ain't no better, and here's the regular traffic shunted into a sidin' to let a pack of condemned soldiers go by." All of which, being interpreted, means that one of the Pasha's regiments is being moved from Cairo to Alexandria, and that, as there is only a single line of rails, we are put aside until the military train has passed. Three hours in this burning sun, parched with thirst, without a chance of drinking—for the water-filled goatskins are so repulsive in look and smell, that I can't yet fly to them for solace—with nothing to do, without books or work or healthful play to pass the time, what is a once-busy bee to do? I am growing desperate, when the ever-constant bishop, sweltering but smiling and cheerful even in these adverse circumstances, comes to my aid. He has learned that there is a fair going on in the town, and he proposes that we should go and see it. An Egyptian fair; by all means let us start at once!

Passing out of the palisaded gate of the railway station, round which is loitering a crowd of sinister-looking, dirty ruffians, we come first upon a suburb of mud hovels, and then upon the little town itself: dull, quiet, neat, and orderly, the houses of a better class than I have seen, save at Alexandria. No signs of a fair as yet, except a thin and broken line of people advancing in one direction. We follow them: the bishop, who has started a red silk umbrella of portentous dimensions, leading the way, I following, somewhat embarrassed with the stiff ends of my "puggery," which *will* get down my back, tilting my hat over my eyes.

And now rises a distant humming, which announces that we are approaching the scene of festivity; and now, at distances of a hundred yards between, we find men seated on the ground, with large baskets in front of them, containing fruit for sale, and a curious saccharine stuff, not unlike masticated toffee in its appearance; this is *rakatlikoum*, a highly esteemed Eastern sweetmeat; and there are dates, pulpy figs, goards, and a large yellow fruit, very like a shaddock. Led, as usual, by the bishop, I, and other of the passengers, purchase some fruit, and, much refreshed, make our way to a neighbouring spot, where a large crowd is gathered in a ring round a horse-dealer. The

people push aside for us, right and left: not coweringly, but apparently through their amazement at seeing us there: and we find ourselves in the centre of the circle, in company with some half-dozen beautiful horses and as many dirty Bedouins. Two of these are breeders, the others buyers of the horseflesh. You know all about the Bedouin's affection for his horse—won't sell her—at last dying, starving, Pasha offers him enormous sum, he comes to terms, brings the animal, breaks out into a bellow as the money is counted into his hand, jumps on mare's back, rides off, and is never seen again.—Nor, most probably, is the money, though this is not said by the story-teller, nor by Mrs. Norton, who has rendered the anecdote into very sweet and touching verse.

But, the railroads and the march of intellect have changed all this, and the only fear of the owner of the "first lot," a white-bearded old man, with a face which would be benevolent but for a sinister expression of the eye, is lest he should not get enough for it. The "lot," a splendid black mare, very small, with the slenderest legs, the shiniest coat, and altogether in perfect condition, stands stone-still while the four intending purchasers scan her closely. I have attended sales at Mr. Tattersall's yard, but I firmly believe that the Bedouin gentlemen, when their scrutiny is ended, know more of the real points of that mare than all the leg-rubbing, rib-punching, and mouth-examining practised in England would have told them. One of them at last seemingly makes a bid, which the white-bearded old man apparently promptly declines; and then there arises amongst the whole crowd, a shrill and discordant wrangling, in the midst of which we push our way out and proceed further on our researches. After passing two or three more horse-vendors, we come to a knot of people who are highly amused at the antics of a mountebank: a slight, lithe, active fellow, who is throwing summersaults and tying himself into knots in true acrobat fashion. He has a comical expression of face, and evidently possesses a quick perception of the ludicrous, for, observing our party, he assumes an appearance of burlesque terror, running to each side of the ring, and pretending to hide himself; then he falls into convulsions of mock politeness, bowing his head to the ground between his legs, and finally, with a bit of turban cloth and a short stick, he improvises such an excellent imitation of the bishop's umbrella, and makes such pointed pantomimical allusion to the portliness of the bishop's person, that we are feign to beat a retreat, amid the laughter of the crowd. The mirth we leave behind us is, however, nothing to that towards which we are progressing, for just in front of us is the largest and densest circle we have yet come upon, each individual member of which seems mad with delight. Some of those forming the outer ring are actually rolling on the ground and kicking in their joy; others are jumping up and clapping their hands; all are screaming and yelling with laughter. No moving back here to let us pass,

no polite making way, it is too good an entertainment to be given up. The cause of all this tremendous mirth is—a monkey! Jacko, the veritable Jacko of the organs! He is dressed in the usual gaberdine, from beneath which his tail curls so absurdly; he has the ordinary little cap on his head; he has the usual string, with one end round his waist, the other in his master's hand; and he is bowing, dancing, grinning, chattering, and shrieking as is his wont. He is a novelty I suspect at Tantah, for young and old, grave turbaned merchants, and dirty half-nude fellows, are pushing together in the crowd, and seem equally delighted.

As we retrace our steps, we see a guard of soldiers bringing with them some dozen criminals who are being taken from one prison to another. A more miserable set of beings never were beheld: they are robbers who have long infested the neighbourhood, and who, by their atrocities, of which murder and mutilation were mild component parts, have given much trouble to the Pasha's troops. Each wears round his neck, an iron collar, having at the side a link through which runs a chain stretching from end to end of the gang; and each wears an iron anklet to which a similar chain is attached; many are suffering from wounds received in their skirmishes with the troops, and nearly all have sores from the rubbing of their fetters. One old man, with a grizzled beard and one eye, can scarcely move, from the raw condition of his feet, and the progress of all is slow and wearied, except when they are for a moment stimulated by the threats of their guards. Looking at the horrible expression on every face, we can fully credit the deeds imputed to them; and even degraded, miserable, and suffering as their present condition is, they can pluck up enough spirit to gibe and jeer and spit at us as they pass.

Once more at the station, we find that the troop-train has gone by, during our absence, and that we are ready to start. After a long and monotonous ride, we come to a hill across which we are conveyed bodily, train and all, on a kind of moving platform, a portion of the bridge which juts out from either side, but is not joined in the middle.* Thick and muddy is the hill-stream as seen from this point, and bearing but two or three large flat-bottomed barges laden with bricks, and a couple of canjias with large flapping sails. Tedious, too, is its passage by our train, which is divided into three portions, to accommodate it to the length of the moving platform, each portion being separately conveyed across. On the other bank is the refreshment-station, with all sorts of poultry, chops, cutlets, eggs, omelettes, and fruit; and with claret, sherry, pale ale, stout, and soda water.

It was six o'clock when we left Alexandria, and it was nearly nine when, thoroughly worn out, we reached Cairo, where I got housed in safety at Shepherd's Hotel.

* The bridge is now complete. It was at this point that the son of Abbas Pasha was drowned last autumn by the breaking down of the machinery and the submersion of the railway carriage.

After a fitful, mosquito-worried sleep on a large sofa, I was roused at three o'clock next morning to find that the mails had been telegraphed from Suez, that my twenty hours of freedom were at an end, and that I was "In Charge" again.

A PENNY IN THE BANK.

THE place of business of the Bank in question is an enclosed railway arch at the east end of London. Its particular address is at the Christ Church schools, Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road East, and we are at a noonday hour on Monday, and for an hour on Saturday nights, exclusively commercial. Our customers are, on Mondays, little girls with large street-door keys in their hands; wondering younger brothers, who with difficulty get their noses to the level of our desks; hard-working women; on Saturday nights we have for our customers, hard-working men and youths, who put the scanty surplus they can save out of their wages, beyond reach of the tempter, who at the street corner looks so jovial and bright, but whose wraith sits by the hearth at home so damp and cold, muttering curses, prompting cruel deeds and desperate resolves.

We hear of the Bank business on a Saturday night. We see the Bank business on a Monday, and are instructed on the subject of it by its manager, the Rev. Mr. McGill, clergyman of a poor—a very poor—parish at the most uncomfortable end of this great city. There was a journal once existing, which told one day what a London curate can do if he tries.* The successor of that curate, manages this Penny Bank, which was established by his predecessor nearly a dozen years ago, and is almost, or quite, the oldest of its kind in London. It is a bank in which the year's account on a customer's pass-book, shows an average deposit of about seven shillings and sixpence: yet the whole amount annually made the subject of its thousands of transactions is, in a round sum, two thousand pounds. Any man, woman, or child, who can afford a penny for the pass-book, and will lodge a penny as the first deposit, may enjoy the privilege of opening his, her, or its, banking account. There are such Banks, called Penny Banks, in several poor districts of London. There are such banks at Birmingham, Hull, Halifax, York, Leeds, Derby, Lichfield, Selby, Scarborough, Bolton, Southampton, Lancaster, Wakefield, Plymouth, and elsewhere. There ought to be such a Bank in every poor district, and there is no sensible and active gentleman who has a kind heart and a tolerable business faculty, by whom such a Bank may not be established in some place where it is wanted.

He shall have statistics to encourage him. In evidence of the fact that poor people want to put by savings too small to justify the opening of an account with the ordinary savings

* See the first volume of Household Words, page 464.

bank, let these figures be taken. At the Birmingham Savings Bank, seventeen pounds is the average balance owned by each depositor. At the Birmingham Penny Bank, it is not seventeen shillings; and a sum now rapidly growing towards a hundred thousand pounds has passed through that Penny Bank in deposits of small savings averaging less than three shillings a piece. At Halifax, the average amount paid in at once has not been two shillings. At Scarborough, it has been only eightpence, and the average balance kept in the Bank by its customers is six shillings and fourpence. At Shentown, near Lichfield, threepence-halfpenny is the average sum paid in at one time by a customer. Yet, upon such terms, throughout the country, many thousands of accounts are opened.

Many of these establishments place in the savings bank, or in a joint-stock bank yielding interest upon deposits, the bulk of the money of their customers, and allow two per cent., or more, on every small pile of penny savings. Others, need all the interest to cover the expense of management. It is not, however, for the sake of interest that money is deposited; where no interest at all can be afforded, the Bank is seldom found to prosper less. The object of the prudent depositor, is only to place a little hoard beyond the reach of any momentary impulse, while it shall yet remain at hand against the time of a substantial necessity. Three days or a week's notice must be given before money can be drawn out of a Penny Bank. For every case of absolute necessity, but in few cases of mere transitory impulse, that is equivalent to actual possession of the money.

Few who are born to comfort know how various, how sacred, and how simple, are the impulses that send the poor man's hand into his pocket when there is a sixpence in it. Rich and poor, we are all hospitable if we are good for anything. There are some who know what is the hospitality of giving soup, fish, and companionship, to men who have soup, fish, and company at home; who, nine times in a dozen, reckon it irksome to leave home at all; and prefer to decline dining with a friend who cannot show himself, as to wine, cookery, and table-talk, a skilful entertainer. There are others who know what it is to give a dinner in the uttermost sense of the phrase. When the poor man feels a poorer comrade's claim upon his heart, God only knows the luxury he finds in dealing generously by him. To make a Sunday feast of beef and pudding on the table that is spread day after day with scanty fare, to pour beer into the glass and cheery words into the ear of a down-hearted brother, and, forgetting troubles for an hour or two to share with him the consolations of an after-dinner pipe, is not a light temptation under which only the thoughtless fall.

"Wife, old woman, you have been toiling and pining in your faithful love, and we are very poor, though we work hard and do our best. Day after day I have seen you looking anxious and distressed, and slatternly, through being

tired and over-worked. This is our wedding-day—you mind it! What a peck of business it has brought us! There's our poor little Willy, who has gone, and—But you mustn't cry to-day; plenty are left. There's more love than meat in the house. In spite of that, or because of that, let's have it all our own way for once in a time, and let the children see that life is not all made up of struggling!" What sacred holidays are these; full of delicious rest, islands of bliss in which the storm-tost people anchor to forget their cockroaches and mouldy biscuit; where the air is odorous with flowers, and the fruits that grow under the idler's hand press their delights into his palm. The luxury of meat unstinted, to those who eat it sparingly day by day, of idleness and pleasure now and then to those whose lives are but too full of labour and pain, the strength of a poor man's pity for another whose distress seems to be greater than his own—it makes the poorest quarters of our towns a harvest-field to beggars. This and much more than this, will force the hand of the poor Englishman to break into a hoard that lies immediately at his fingers' ends. We talk abundantly about the gin-shop, not without remembering by what temptations poor creatures are gathered into flocks and driven cruelly into those slaughter-houses of the inner life. But we do not give enough thought to the sources of ten thousand acts of improvidence over which good angels may rejoice rather than weep. It is one of the chief griefs of poverty that it compels natural men to deny themselves more than it is good that they should be denied—indulgence of right wishes, obedience to pure and worthy promptings of the heart.

There is a simplicity of mind in those who have been slightly educated, which gives to good impulses more strength and freedom than they usually have among persons who test what is in them by the long and wide experience of which all common knowledge is but the result. A household in which very few shillings are enough to form a valuable and substantial saving, enough to tide over a day of unexpected loss, to meet some serious claim, or to find the little luxury that may be life to a sick child, must not be spent without deliberation. It is good to put it away in a teapot, and to put the teapot on a high shelf. If the shelf be so high that one must take two or three days to reach it, that is better still. There will be time for reflection interposed between the wish to spend it and the getting it to spend, and what is done will be done only for sufficient reason. This kind of storing does not forbid—why should it?—expenditure on seasonable pleasures. Whitsuntide has caused a cheery run upon our Penny Banks, forshillings very slowly saved, to yield a holiday worth having. Only it is well that such holidays should be deliberately chosen, and appointed, and provided for, as the great household events they are: not idly snatched on the first prompting of a bit of outer sunshine.

We sit by the paying-out table of the Penny Bank. There is one desk at which money for

which notice has been given is paid out. There are three desks for paying in, each furnished with three recorders—one in pass-book, one in day-book, one in ledger—of the little sums paid in. No poor man's earnings shall be lost through negligence of record. We may read the secret of this girl, hardly too old to lead nursery games in a home ignorant of want, whose pleasant face is set so firmly with a sense of the world's care and duty, and who stands erect, with the street-door key in her hand, waiting for sixteen shillings and twopence: a comparatively large sum, and her mother's whole deposit. It is a sum hoarded through months of small solicitude, and now, no doubt, there is a great care to be killed by it. The girl knows all about it. Her face shows that she is acquainted with her mother's cares and is partner of her confidence. There is a boy here who has given notice of, and is fulfilling, his intention to draw on the Bank for a shilling. Many of these young people are depositors on their own account, for they all have found in their homes good reason for earning something at an early age.

Across the room there is a girl of twelve in a frock of deep mourning which she has outgrown, and to which a tiny brother clings with a small fist. She has to mind him, and has brought him with her, while she carries to the miserably slender hoard, the last mite wrung as savings from the widow's pittance for long days of toil. The girl is a child, with the sedateness of old age in her manner. While she is giving her mind to operations with the pass-book, her young charge has wandered to the empty grate, and has made a horse of something that he found there, and has vanished on horseback. When the business is over, the staid sister searches the whole room with a grave look, satisfies herself that her charge is gone (as a child should) into the sunshine, and quietly departs herself into the golden summer light.

She has gone out of an enclosed arch fitted with doors and mysterious suggestions of outlying premises, furnished with desks and stools, with a frill of zinc that may stop leakage from above, and with a smoky clock over the stove, suggestive of ideas not honourable to the contrivance serving in the place of chimney; and she is gone out into a hard and dull paved court that will lead into a street with forty smells, of which not one suggests the handiwork of God. But, she has fulfilled her small errand of love and duty; she has found for her mother true service in small service under that brick vault; and in the sordid street she has, at any rate, the vault of heaven overhead, and the pure light—the only thing in nature that cannot be poisoned.

We have spoken so far, without reference to the proverb, Take care of the Pence, and the Pounds will take care of themselves. As a general proverb, it contains more falsehood than

truth. But, it is certain that they who count earnings in shillings, can save only in pence, and that the savings banks, which do not receive any sum smaller than a shilling, do not meet the want of thousands who are helped—as their free use of it bears witness—by the Penny Bank. In this Bank, money is easily deposited in a safe place, as fast as it comes in excess, however trifling the excess may be, and is easily withdrawn again for use. The founder of a Penny Bank should have as many Bank days in a week, as means allow. School teachers and monitors may readily be taught how to act as its clerks. An hour on one day, or on two days, in the week—Saturday night furnishing, if possible, one of these hours—is the usual time allowed. In the case of savings banks, it has been found that at Edinburgh, where the savings bank is open every day, and on three evenings in the week, the use made of it is three times greater than is general elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Into the minuter practical details of Penny Bank management we need not enter here. Various methods are used for securing accuracy of accounts, and a set of books published at Warwick (Morgan's Penny Bank System) is very suitable for establishments of this kind in which the press of business is not great. Useful help for whatever head may plan the actual institution of one of these Banks, will be found also in the second of a series of Plain Papers on the Social Economy of the People, published by Messrs. Bell and Daldy.

We remained at the Bank maintained in the parish of St. George's in the East until its doors were closed. We saw the several books made up, compared and balanced with the money taken, of which a substantial part was a bagful of copper. Record of the hour's work in ink, and in the metal that had been deposited, having been found to tally perfectly, the business was over for the day. It has been said that seven and sixpence is, in this poor parish, the average year's deposit of a customer, while in the Penny Bank of an adjoining district there are average deposits of a pound. The hour's work at a single bank time here, represents the paying in on one side, and the drawing out on the other side, of small sums, yielding a total in each case varying between ten and twenty pounds.

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